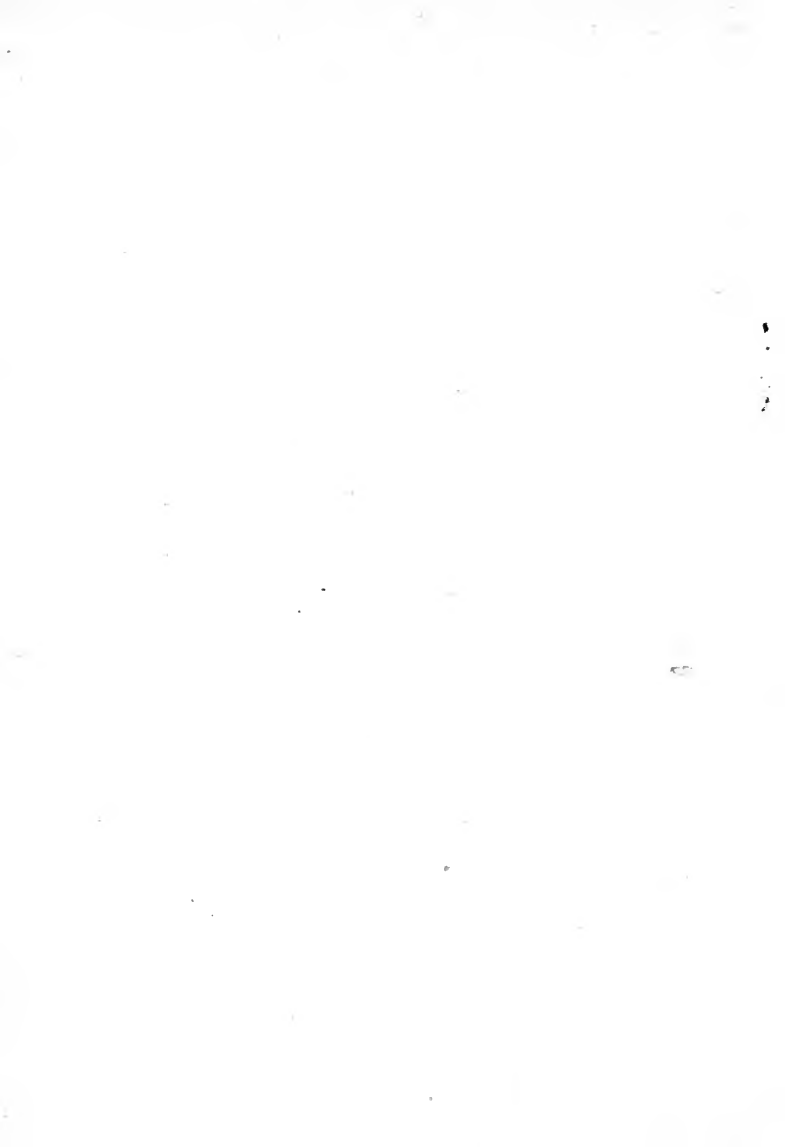


HOSPITAL LIFE
IN THE
ARMY OF THE POTOMAC.

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HOSPITAL LIFE

IN THE

ARMY OF THE POTOMAC.

BY

WILLIAM HOWELL REED.

BOSTON:•

SPECIAL EDITION.

1891.

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TO
HON. FRANK B. FAY,
THE HUMANE AND CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN,
THE FRIEND OF THE SOLDIER, IN CAMP
AND IN HOSPITAL,
AND OF THE SUFFERING EVERYWHERE,
THIS BOOK
IS GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED.

PREFACE.

THE writer has tried to avoid in this little book a too highly-colored picture of hospital life. He has rather aimed to present a sketch which should have the merit of simplicity and accuracy even in its minor details, with a full sense of his obligations to the cause of historical truth.

The manuscript was not written, in the first instance, for publication, but to preserve, for the writer's own satisfaction, a record of a valuable personal experience. As it grew under his hand, old memories were quickened, old companionships seemed to be renewed, former scenes were revived, and the splendid examples of heroism which were daily and hourly witnessed kindled an impulse which has resulted in this work. Yielding to the judgment of his friends, he submits it to the public, asking for it a kindly reception.

W. H. R.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

THE author would express, in a new preface, his grateful surprise at the cordial reception and words of appreciation which have been accorded to these memories of hospital life. And although the book is but an outline of a profound experience, and is valuable to the author only as an outline, he cannot be insensible to the kindly criticism it has received. In writing, now that these events have passed into history, the memories of that period of suffering and triumph have become hallowed memories: hallowed, indeed, with peculiar sacredness, from the recent death of one who was so much a part of those years of sacrifice, that the preface would naturally become a memorial of the sweet ministry of HELEN L. GILSON.

But she would deprecate many words of eulogy; and there should be a reverential regard for her preference, that we should stand silent over her grave.

That she lives in human hearts, is better than eulogy; that her example is an inspiration, is a grander triumph of her life than any memorial of it could be; and the author is grateful that he has had the opportunity in these pages of making even a brief record of such a ministry.

W. H. R.

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IN THE

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WASHINGTON TO FREDERICKSBURG.

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THE winter of eighteen hundred and sixty-four had passed, the buds and leaves of another spring time were opening, and we were entering upon the fourth year of the war. For the first time in its history the military power had been placed under one directing mind, General Grant having been made

Lieutenant General of the Armies of the United States. For many weeks it had been apparent that a strong hand was at the helm. New dispositions were made, a thorough reorganization was effected, and confidence pervaded the public mind. Few, out of the army, realized how tremendous the shock of battle would be, while the Medical Department was preparing for such work as had never before taxed its energies.

The Army of the Potomac was massed near Culpepper Court House and Brandy Station, their pickets extending to the Rapidan. On the night of Tuesday, the 3d of May, 1864, the army was thrown across the river, the Second Corps by way of United States Ford, and the Fifth and Sixth Corps by way of Germania Ford. The next day, Wednesday, was consumed in bringing the corps into line. The Second, which was to form the left of the army, and had to march in rear of the Fifth and Sixth, was not quite in position on the left of Warren on Thursday morning. The Ninth Corps was brought over on Wednesday and Thursday. The crossing was effected without opposition, and probably without the knowledge of the enemy; but no sooner did General Lee obtain information that the army had crossed, than he at once moved to attack it, before the line could be formed, and with the object,

doubtless, also, of preventing us from reaching Spottsylvania Court House before him. He therefore, by one of his rapid and skilful movements, assumed the offensive; but after two days of heavy fighting, he took the defensive, and pursued that policy to the end.

The battles of the Wilderness had been fought on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, the 5th, 6th, and 7th of May. Accounts of the fearful losses had been telegraphed to our cities; fresh reënforcements were ordered, and volunteers for both the Sanitary and the Christian Commissions were going forward to the front to assist in the emergency. The wounded had not reached Washington, but were hourly expected. It was Monday night, the 9th instant. In temporary sheds at the Seventh Street Landing the Sanitary Commission were organizing for the prompt relief of those who were so soon to need their care. Crackers, lemons, cans of coffee, milk, and stimulants were at hand. At midnight we were in our blankets for an hour's rest; but the hoarse cry of the watchman, "Steamers in sight!" brought us to our feet, and before they were at the wharf, our coffee, milk punch, gruel, and beef-tea were ready. Six hundred men were stowed upon the first steamer. It was as dark as a sepulchre — as silent as the grave. An occasional

moan would call attention to some sufferer who could not sleep, his only pallet, a wisp of straw, upon the deck. The men were packed so closely that it was only with extreme caution that we could pass from stem to stern without jarring some shattered limb or suppurating stump. Our flickering candle gave a ghastly pallor to the pinched and suffering faces, and a sickening reality to the torn and clotted garments which covered throbbing wounds. Sharp cries, from time to time, came through the darkness, telling us that, in moving about the boat, somebody had been careless in his step, and put some poor fellow in deeper pain. The sufferings of the ambulance transportation, the exposures at Belle Plain, where the wounded were without shelter in a soaking rain, and the silent endurance of this crowded steamer, made our ministry one of healing mercy and Christian love. The men were nearly famished, and, as we moved among them with our cans of coffee, punch, and lemonade, their brimming eyes and swelling hearts spoke more eloquently of gratitude than any words could do. The steamer was rapidly discharged, the men passing out in long lines to the ambulances waiting to transfer them to their hospital beds, where rest and all healing influences would soon be employed in their restoration.

As they passed along, those on the stretchers, and the lighter cases alike, would hold up their poor, dumb wounds for a cooling bath, which we gave "in the name of a disciple."

Before the first steamer was discharged, others were waiting at the landing with their living freights, a total of twenty-nine hundred wounded men, to whom this ministry was to be repeated. The same crowded decks, the same processions of sufferers, the same quiet endurances, all day long; the hard, sharp lines about the mouth, and the sunken eye, showing endurance of pain and an unwillingness to intrude it upon others. Reverently we covered some poor fellow with his blanket, his only shroud, as he was taken out dead from where they had laid him, his comrades thinking by his stillness that he was only "taking rest in sleep," not knowing that he had entered upon his eternal rest.

With Mr. and Mrs. James F. B. Marshall, of Boston, I started down the Potomac for Belle Plain, on our way to Fredericksburg. With a regiment of infantry and a battery of artillery, our decks were crowded; but our destination was reached at last; and here we found the base of the army. A simple beach, with richly-wooded hills, rose abruptly from the water, from which long piers, hastily extemporized out of

pontoon boats, ran out into the river, where seventy-five steamers and transports were unloading supplies or landing the reënforcements which were pouring down from the defences of Washington. Long wagon trains were moving off loaded with commissary supplies and ammunition for the new fields of carnage in prospect, while other trains of wagons and ambulances were coming in, discharging the wounded upon the ground, where they were to lie without shelter until transportation to Washington could be furnished them. Heavy rains had made of this soft Virginia soil sloughs of mud up to the wheel hubs; and the roads would have been considered impassable in any other than such circumstances of fearful necessity. Three or four thousand wounded had been discharged, and the numbers were every hour increasing. News also came of another train, three miles in length, now due from Fredericksburg. We could not feed them all; we could not dress their wounds; we could not help the dying; we could not minister those consolations which are so precious in such cases to those who needed outwardly all our care. We could only do a little, and, in this vast aggregate of suffering, how trifling this little seemed! A kitchen was hastily established; our stores were ample — coffee, milk,

whiskey, sugar, lemons, and crackers ; and, having an abundance of wood and good spring water, we were soon ready to move among the men with soothing drinks, which gave them at the same time new strength and courage. The rain kept pouring down upon these shelterless thousands ; the ground was like a sponge. Fires were started upon the hill side, and in the evening they were gleaming in their cheerful warmth, while the wounded were accepting their lot with a patience which was a new revelation every hour. When a slice of bread was offered to a soldier suffering from an amputation, he said, " Pass it along ; *he* needs it more than I do," pointing to a comrade near him, who had not tasted food for days. The noble fellow lost nothing by his willing sacrifice. Such was the spirit of our wounded men.

In this tremendous activity and effort, where such miracles of labor were performed in a space so narrow that two ambulances could not move abreast, all seemed to be in inextricable confusion. In the river were barges, steamers, propellers, and transports — some at anchor, some discharging, some arriving, some departing, and all jammed together in confusion, which was increased by the blowing of the whistles and the roar of escaping steam ; while on shore were tired

mules and broken-down horses, army wagons and ambulances, stuck hopelessly in the mud, all a surging, concentrated mass of intense activity and suffering.

Dr. Cuyler, the chief medical officer at this point, was the directing mind, evolving order out of chaos, and harmony out of this terrible discord and disorder. With grateful feelings I look back upon his benevolent countenance, his noble form, and his well-balanced mind, as he sat upon his horse, calm and unmoved, patient and resolute, giving his orders with a quiet dignity and composure which carried strength and confidence with every word. His kindness and courtesy in such an hour to a stranger, who felt it to be necessary to intrude upon him with an order for transportation, will ever be remembered. An ambulance was placed at my disposal, and within a few hours I had joined a train which was moving towards Fredericksburg.

Halting for dinner a few miles out, the train parked, and the horses were rested and fed. While we bivouacked, a man, who had just died, was taken from an ambulance which was passing in from the front, and was laid by the road side. The drivers could find no time to bury him; but it was impossible to leave that unknown soldier, upon whose face were written the

untold sufferings of the ambulance, to be trampled upon by passing trains. Procuring a spade, I dug into the soggy, sandy soil bordering the Potomac, soon making for him his narrow home. In his pocket was only a photograph of a little infant, which showed that there was one tie at least to bind him to this world. Placing it upon his breast, and covering it with his blouse, he was laid down to rest. Gathering about me a crowd of men, — soldiers, teamsters, and others, — I performed my first funeral service by that river side, commending the soul to the care of an all-loving, all-merciful God.

At sunset we camped for the night. Before the camp was settled, a large body of rebel prisoners, of Johnson's Division, by count ninety-four hundred and fifty-three men, captured by Hancock's Second Corps at Spottsylvania, came in sight, moving slowly under guard, filling the roads, shambling rather than walking, with a step so irresolute, and with strength so exhausted, that we could not help mingling pity with our triumph.

The Confederate soldier, — it is difficult to describe him, yet we can all recognize the yellowish-gray homespun, torn and threadbare ; the bleached, grizzled, uncut hair and beard, the sallow countenance, the

scant equipments, the lean, wiry look, and air of reckless defiance or careless superiority, which is always assumed when passing under Northern scrutiny. "We uns caught it from you uns; but look right sharp for the Johnnies next time," said one to me in passing, while there was doubtless not a little quiet satisfaction that they had so far in the campaign escaped unhurt, and were now removed from Yankee lead. They were strictly guarded, and at night were enclosed in a hollow square, defended by artillery, so parked that, upon an attempt to escape, grape and canister would have made sad work with their compacted mass.

Our ambulance train was four miles long, and we were halted upon an eminence which commanded a fine rolling country, richly wooded hills, and quiet valleys, which, as night closed in, were brilliantly illuminated with the thousand camp fires that were burning all about us. Our own fires were lighted; our coffee was boiling; and our pork and hard tack were never so acceptable as now, when we rested from this day of unusual excitement and fatigue. The chill evening air compelled us to draw closer to the embers, and we were soon lost in sleep. The guerrilla bands operating in the rear of the army had attacked a train the

previous day, run off the horses, scattered the unarmed drivers, and fired upon our already wounded men. Our picket guard exchanged frequent shots with this unseen enemy during the night, but the dawn found us fresh and ready to move forward into Fredericksburg.

This city lies in a valley between two fine ranges of hills, known respectively as the Heights of Falmouth, on the northern bank of the Rappahannock, and the Maries, outside the limits of the town, on the southern side. Embosomed in this fertile lowland, its steeples were visible only when we approached quite near them, the unevenness of the country preventing any distant view of the place. The houses are of brick, dark, rough, and much shattered by shot and shells; the architecture is quaint, and the general air is that of ancient respectability. It has none of the activity of Richmond, nor the beauty of Petersburg; and although the movements of the hospital department gave to the city a certain life, yet the crumbling town, deserted by its population, ruined by the conflicts which had twice raged through its streets, gave it an appearance of death, from which it seemed that there could be no resurrection. We reached the pontoon bridge and crossed it. The ruins on the banks of the river told the story of the destruction, by our forces, of the

hiding-places of the sharpshooters that contested the passage of our pioneers, who, in Burnside's first attack, drove the enemy into their intrenched position beyond the town. The buildings were rapidly becoming appropriated for temporary hospitals, the Medical Director, Dr. Edward B. Dalton, having taken possession of public edifices and private dwellings, storehouses, sheds, and churches. The pews were torn out, and the wood used for fires in the kitchens; but the wounded were arriving in such numbers, that they were laid in the streets and upon the sidewalks to wait for shelter to be provided. Ambulance trains moving into or passing out of the city; ammunition or commissary wagons creeping slowly on the front; orderlies dashing from post to post; stretchers with dead carried out for burial, or with wounded taking their places for nursing,—all was ceaseless activity and accumulated suffering.

The gardens were fragrant and blooming with flowers. Roses, honeysuckles, tulips, columbines, and stars of Bethlehem were growing in luxuriant profusion along every street, and were hanging in graceful clusters over the now deserted verandas. The red flag of the Sanitary Commission was seen in the distance, and we reached its warehouse, the store of

Mayor Slaughter, who had but then been arrested by the Provost Guard. Our party of three reported to Hon. Frank B. Fay, of Chelsea, Massachusetts, the chief of the Auxiliary Relief Corps; and we were assigned to the Ninth Corps Hospitals, reporting to Dr. Noyes, on Marie's Heights, just outside the city. Every house or place of shelter within a radius of half a mile of the central building was taken and used as a hospital. In mansions of the grandest proportions, in leaky sheds and outhouses crumbling to decay, in rooms, entries, attics, and upon porticos, our wounded men were laid. We were thankful even for floors to place them upon, and this without a single blanket to soften a couch which at best was to be one of so much pain. Among these houses was the Rowe mansion, occupied by the owner, an old man, whose sympathies were clearly with the rebel cause. His cellar at night was a rendezvous for the guerrillas, who held their secret meetings there, planning for the recapture of the town with all our wounded. This house was our headquarters, and we felt that we were living over a powder mine, which at any moment might explode.

We found here a delicate woman and her little child: it was announced to her that her house must be used as a hospital, two rooms being retained by her.

She was asked to prepare some dinner for our party, and was promised that we should cause her as little trouble as possible. The poor woman burst into tears, saying, "Indeed, indeed, sir, I have nothing in the house but a little corn meal for myself and this little one;" and her story of extreme poverty was only too true. From affluence and a luxurious home, she had been reduced to this, and, as we afterwards knew, **was even suffering for want of food.**

CHAPTER II.

SCENES IN FREDERICKSBURG.

Ninth Corps Hospital. — Marie's Heights. — Buildings filled with Wounded. — Adoniram Cookson, and other Cases of Interest. — Indian Sharpshooters. — Last Words. — The Wounded on the Lawn. — A Day of Horrors. — Reënforcements from Washington. — Flowers strowing their Way to Victory. — The Battle. — The Roses stained with Blood. — Encampment of Ambulances. — Night-work on the Field. — Removal and Burial of the Dead. — The Baptism under the Ambulance. — Helen L. Gilson. — Evacuation of Fredericksburg. — "Torpedo Hooker." — The Guerrillas. — Down the Rappahannock. — Hospital Work on the "Kent." — Mr. and Mrs. James F. B. Marshall.

INTO the days which followed were concentrated more vital experiences than usual in an ordinary lifetime ; hours prolonged into days, and days into months of suffering. The accumulating wants of our men daily called me to the central storehouse of the Commission, where the liberal supplies which were received by the Sanitary wagon trains were as liberally dispensed on requisitions suggested by the most press-

ing needs of the moment. Our principal hospital building was situated directly on Marie's Heights, and was a large and elegantly-finished dwelling, the mansion of John L. Marie, from whose name these heights are known, — the house now ruined by the plunging shot and exploding shells during the battle of December, 1862, which had opened great holes in its walls, tearing away partitions, cutting through the roof, ripping off the rich mouldings and ornaments over the windows, which again were shattered by the concussion of artillery.

In one corner, upon a stretcher, lay a soldier, whose open, manly face, high forehead, and clear, intelligent eye, bespoke an excellent character. He was wounded through the lungs, and breathed only with sharp stitches of pain. I recall his cheerful courage, his pleasant companionship, his bright smile, which seemed to me to light up that room of suffering and death with a radiance from the other world. In all the crowding memories which come back to me, his face is clearly photographed upon my mind; and I have only now to wonder whether, in our hurried evacuation, his life was sacrificed by the necessity of the removal from the tender mercies of a merciless enemy. But I know from the calm, even triumphant, faith with

which he endured his sufferings, that he was prepared for whatever the kindly providence of God should send.

Near him was a most hopeless and pitiful case—a lad, Adoniram Cookson, wounded in the back by a shell. He was a mere boy, not over fifteen, so pinched, and thin, and delicate in frame, that I could easily have carried him in my arms; and his face had grown prematurely old with suffering. The only position in which he could rest was upon his elbows and knees, and he turned helplessly from side to side, moaning and talking in a wild delirium. I cannot forget his utterly hopeless look in his moments of sanity, the eyes and face so wan and worn with days and nights of agony. The poor boy slept at last his long and quiet sleep, and was buried in the newly-made cemetery, which increased with fearful rapidity every day. We covered his lonely resting-place with flowers.

Another lad, in the corner, was propped up by a bed-rest, and was slowly wasting away. We kept him alive with stimulants, and could not but feel that even this effort was a mockery. He was already such a wreck his former companions could hardly have recognized him. He was always uncomplaining, could never express too much gratitude for all our

care, although he knew he was past all healing ; and at last, when it became necessary to move him , the good angels took him gently to the loving Father's arms.

Upon this same floor, only a little apart from the rest, in a store-room, lay a soldier in the last agonies of death — a poor, mutilated remnant of a man, and a most loathsome sight. His case was too bad to be placed with others, and he was laid carefully upon such ragged garments as we could collect for a bed, not enough to keep his shattered frame from the floor, though perhaps he had not sufficient feeling left to be aware of its hardness. It was always a relief, when morning came, to know that the spirits of such as these had passed on “ over the river ” to the fairer fields beyond.

Even the entries of this old mansion were crowded with sick and dying men. No available space was left unoccupied. The poor fellows just arrived had not had their clothes off since they were wounded, and were sleeping in blood and filth, and were swarming with vermin. They lay as close as they could be packed, the contaminated air growing worse every hour. The openings in the torn and battered walls assisted somewhat in ventilation ; they were needed

and welcome breathing-holes. And so from room to room, from entry to entry, all was still, and dark, and ghastly. Pallid faces, or bronzed faces, with eager eyes, looked up in melting thankfulness, sometimes turning, in their unrest, to change a position which was wearing them to the bone, and to pray for a sleeping powder, which for this night at least should give them relief in unconsciousness. "It is so hard to hear the hours strike!" said one to me; "and yet the night must wear slowly on." Here side by side they lay, through long days and longer nights of suffering, with no sound but the clock, the stifled moan, or the delirious muttering. The air was so close and nauseating that we often reeled with faintness at our work, while these poor fellows waited and bore all their burden in a brave endurance that was like a miracle.

In a group of four Indian sharpshooters, in one corner of this entry, each with the loss of a limb, of an arm at the shoulder, of a leg at the knee, or with an amputation of the thigh, never was patience more finely illustrated. They neither spoke nor moaned, but suffered and died, making a mute appeal to our sympathy, and expressing both in look and manner their gratitude for our care.

William H. Chambers, whose noble, athletic frame

was paralyzed by a spinal wound, prefers a stretcher in the open air to the close and crowded rooms, and lies helpless and alone upon the lawn. There was a touching contrast between the poor, wrecked body and the bright, clear intellect which seemed to be burning like a flame. Vigorous in thought, quick in memory, quiet and calm in conversation, he was a strong man in all but his shattered body, which was fast sinking to decay and death. He knew he could not live, and he did not wish to live to be a burden to his friends; and as we were about to move him to the steamer, he died, leaving messages for those at home, and welcoming the change as a bright angel of relief, with perfect trustfulness. I was strangely drawn to him, and could not resist the inspiration of his gentle, kindly spirit, which could look so bravely upon death, and speak so calmly and without fears of those far away who would so mourn for him. Yet his death was a relief to all—to him and to us, who felt that life prolonged would be to him a lingering misery.

One soldier (I can never forget his simple, earnest faith) asked me to stop and talk with him. A discharge of grape and shrapnel through his leg had shattered it from thigh to foot; and as the wound was fatal, an amputation was deemed unnecessary. The

poor man knew his end was near ; yet his strength was not quite gone, and he had much to say of his wife and his poor crippled boy, and he asked me to write to them for him. He told me his motive for entering the army, of his pleasant home among the Green Mountains of Vermont, and of his great sacrifice. He had been, in his earlier days, a minister of the Methodist faith, and, later, the editor of a paper, which had taken its stand boldly and freely for the principles at stake in the great contest. He dropped his pen and shouldered his musket when the call for men had come ; and his life and service in the army had been a sincere, religious offering. He had a fine, clear eye, a calm forehead, with thin gray hair, silvered by care and suffering. As I sat on the floor with his hand in mine, I found his extremities growing cold, and the film gathering over his eyes. From his whispered words I found that he realized that the angel was hovering over him. I cut a lock of his hair, and the smile which lighted up his face showed me that he was aware of it, and knew that it was the last token we could send to his wife and children. His breathing ceased ; and placing my hand upon the noble heart, I found it still.

The last words of one of these heroic men were

very striking, and worth a record here. He was wounded in the groin, and had been lying for seven days with no possible hope of recovery, and with very little relief. In reply to a question about his burial, he said, "Put upon me a clean, white shirt; wash and shave me, and put two white roses in my hands." Then he added to those who were standing over him, "Boys, keep on fighting for the flag; bear all things and suffer all things, but never give it up." His request was fulfilled, even to the roses, and his grave was strewed with flowers.

Monday, the 23d of May, 1864, was a most lovely day. The breeze came fresh and cool from the north; the air was pure and clear; the sky perfectly cloudless, and of an intense azure, disclosing "the blue depths of heaven." It was a day for the convalescents, and it seemed as if those who were near to death must be revived by the delicious softness of the bracing air. We moved them out of the stifling rooms to the lawn. Under a grand old oak, whose spreading branches gave shelter to nearly fifty men, was a Massachusetts lad, Joseph White, whose case for many days I had watched with the strongest interest. His wound seemed not dangerous, only painful; it was in the arm, under the shoulder. He was always

cheerful; and in his place, next the door, I knew where to look for a kindly greeting whenever I entered the room where he lay. He had been sadly weakened by hemorrhage, but was hopeful that within ten days he should be at home under his mother's care, and he wanted me to write to her. Taking pen and paper, at his dictation I wrote a most comforting letter to his home; it was full of hopes and plans. He felt as sure of life as any of us who ministered to him, while he was in reality at the brink of an open grave. I left him for an hour, hardly out of sight, and still at work among his companions, who seemed to need care even more than he; when, turning, I noticed an extreme pallor upon his face. He had just realized that a hemorrhage, which was then beginning, would soon place him beyond all human aid. An artery had been eaten away in process of healing, and he was bleeding to death. There was no help, and he knew it; but he was as calm and resigned as when he thought that he had long life before him. It was most touching to see how bravely he could look at those oozing drops, which every instant told his approach nearer and nearer to the other world. The letter was still unsealed, and he asked me to add a postscript; then, in a deeply solemn voice, he prayed, "Lord, bless

me!" and passed on where all is blessing, joy, and peace.

In the mean time fierce conflicts were going on. The wounded from the Wilderness and Spottsylvania were daily swelling the numbers of our patients. One ambulance and wagon train, which reached the Heights, discharged their living freights of five hundred wounded men upon the ground, there being no nook nor corner of shelter in any building in the town. We were almost overwhelmed by the accumulated work which every hour seemed to be bringing to us. Surely such a day of horrors the sun had rarely looked upon. These sufferers had not eaten food for days. They were exhausted with hunger; many were dying at that moment for want of nourishment; and the ghastly, undressed wounds made us heart-sick. Five hundred wounds to be examined, bathed, and dressed; five hundred men to be fed and washed, and with but our little company of aids to do it! One man, whose piteous appeal I could not resist, asked me to dress his leg. It was a flesh wound, but was dry and hard. The bandage was stiff and clotted; and when I had cleansed the skin, I found that he had bled to death. At the moment of his appeal to me his life was going out. But a few minutes, and he lay on a stretcher

ready for burial. The surgeons were at work, probing, extracting balls, amputating in the open air, while upon every hand were cries of agony from the poor fellows, which would have melted any but a heart of stone.

The tenderness and gratitude of the men were always touching. One man said to me, in answer to an inquiry about the roads over which he had been jolted, "All this I can bear; but when I think of the tender-hearted people who come so far to care for us, I cannot help the tears." In another case, a boy, who was very badly shot, said to me, as I wrote for him, "Tell my mother as pleasant things as you can. Tell her the truth; but qualify it by saying that I am in good hands, and am doing well. Tell her about the garden of this house, about the flowers, and the kind, good Mrs. Marshall, who is like an angel to us all;" as indeed she was in all her blessed ministries; and then he sobbed out the name of each brother and sister whom he held so closely in his remembrance.

The fearful and undecided battles of the Wilderness and of Spottsylvania, the decimated regiments, and the prospect of continued active operations for an indefinite period, made the call for reënforcements imperative. The fortifications of Washington were left

comparatively undefended, and their garrisons were transferred to active duty in the field. A column of sixteen thousand men moved down to join the army. We had received the news of the success and capture of prisoners and artillery at Spottsylvania, who were actually passing to the rear, while this body of fresh troops was marching through Fredericksburg for the front. They were full of fire, and their enthusiasm was kindled afresh at the sight of these captured guns and other trophies of that bloody field. The clustering roses were growing in profusion everywhere; and as the column passed, we threw garlands of flowers, as if to strew their way to victory. Their polished arms glistened brilliantly in the sun; their colors were flowing out in the breeze, and they moved forward firmly, and, as it proved, to an immediate engagement. Within twenty-four hours five hundred men were brought back bleeding, wounded, dead, or dying; the same roses, scarcely faded, were stained with blood, which even then was hardly dry. Ewell's Corps, detached from its main army to make a *détour* of our rear to capture our wagon trains, was met, fought, and repulsed within six miles of where we were; and now the ambulances were returning over the very ground upon which these men had moved with steps so firm

and hearts so light but a few hours before. It was nearly sunset ; and as the train must halt for the night, it was parked in an open, ploughed field, directly at the foot of Marie's Heights — that famous position which our troops had in previous battles stormed in vain.

The camp for the night was settled at dark ; the drivers had lain down to rest ; the fires were blazing brightly, while the moon, half obscured in the smoke of these tremendous battles, shone out red and lurid upon the field, lighting it up for our ministries to those who were in the agonies of death. Here was this vast addition to our numbers, — the dead to be taken out and buried, the living to be fed, and washed, and surgically dressed. Detailing our guard we visited every ambulance, moving those who had died. One by one they were placed upon stretchers, their bodies hardly cold, their limbs in every position, and they were carried out to an adjoining field, where they were laid side by side. In the mean time our kitchen was taxed to its utmost capacity in preparing nourishment ; and before midnight every man had an ample supper, such as we could hastily prepare. Our work went on. There were throbbing wounds to be dressed, and fevered limbs to be cooled by fresh water applications.

With basins, sponges, bandages, and lint, and with clear spring water, we went from ambulance to ambulance, bathing, cleansing, soothing wounds which were yet fresh and open, and some so ghastly as to make us almost faint. Arms, legs, shoulders, jaws, and feet had been carried away; many had received only the most hurried treatment upon the field, while others had not been attended to at all.

Under one of the ambulances we found a lad, Charles H. Cutler, of the First Massachusetts Heavy Artillery, dreadfully wounded in the back. He had crawled out and was lying on the ground, gasping for a breath of fresh air, covered with his tent-cloth, which was saturated and discolored with his blood. His sufferings were such that he prayed that he might die. We attempted to dress his back; but to move him caused so sharp an agony, that we could only bathe and wash the wound with the cold water which we had at hand. The Rev. William H. Channing, who was of our party, with that lightning flash of sympathetic feeling which was characteristic of all his service in the field, drew from the lad his story, got his father's address, and spoke to him of his critical condition. "My boy," said he, "do you know what it is to pray that you may die?" "Ah, yes; for

death would bring me so much peace," he replied. "Will you baptize me here? I shall feel better then, for my father always wanted me to be baptized." So in that rough, open field, on our knees under the ambulance, the poor boy was received into Christ's Church on earth, into the real communion of which he was so soon to enter in heaven. In no prayer or service of such profound solemnity had I ever joined; and the promise was made real in that midnight experience, if it was ever fulfilled, "that where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Administering a sleeping powder, we left the lad quietly at rest. Moving through the train, we kept at work until all was still. The embers of the fires were dying out; perfect stillness reigned through all the camp, with the exception of the moanings of the men who were to pass a sleepless night in pain. The dead were not to be left uncared for nor uncovered. There they were in one long row, laid side by side, stark and stiff, the moon looking calmly down upon them — all soldiers of a common cause, all dead in a service which we trust had given them perfect freedom. With a flickering candle we went over each body, examining clothing, marking every article, from gun-stopper to watch, or photo-

graph, or Bible ; collecting data of wounds or death, with the addresses of their friends, to whom the news was yet to come of their burial in an enemy's country by friendly hands. Then with tent-cloth and blanket we covered them, leaving them to be baptized with the dew of evening, and committing them to the hands of a loving and merciful God.

At daylight we were on the field again, with fresh water, crackers, milk punch, and coffee, to give all the refreshment we could before starting them over those terrible roads between Fredericksburg and Belle Plain. The dead were now to be buried. For hours the sun had been blazing with its midsummer heat upon the field, and its effect was only too apparent. With two spades we began to make the trench, into which they were to be laid ; and when it was finished, the blanket coverings were removed, and Mr. Channing stood upon the embankment and commenced his short funeral service : “ *When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.*”

With an appropriate and touching prayer, fervently remembering those who were bereaved, we laid, one by one, into their last resting-place, these mutilated

bodies, so changed in these last few hours that no friend could have recognized them.

One afternoon, just before the evacuation, when the atmosphere of our rooms was close and foul, and all were longing for a breath of our cooler northern air, while the men were moaning in pain, or were restless with fever, and our hearts were sick with pity for the sufferers, I heard a light step upon the stairs; and looking up I saw a young lady enter, who brought with her such an atmosphere of calm and cheerful courage, so much freshness, such an expression of gentle, womanly sympathy, that her mere presence seemed to revive the drooping spirits of the men, and to give a new power of endurance through the long and painful hours of suffering. First with one, then at the side of another, a friendly word here, a gentle nod and smile there, a tender sympathy with each prostrate sufferer, a sympathy which could read in his eyes his longing for home love, and for the presence of some absent one — in those few minutes hers was indeed an angel ministry. Before she left the room she sang to them, first some stirring national melody, then some sweet or plaintive hymn to strengthen the fainting heart; and I remember how the notes penetrated to every part of the building. Soldiers with less severe

wounds, from the rooms above, began to crawl out into the entries, and men from below crept up on their hands and knees, to catch every note, and to receive of the benediction of her presence—for such it was to them. Then she went away. I did not know who she was, but I was as much moved and melted as any soldier of them all. This is my first reminiscence of Helen L. Gilson.

Our work in Fredericksburg was nearly ended. The flank movements of General Grant from Spottsylvania to Hanover Court House left the town exposed. The government, with exhaustless energy, was completing the railroad to Aquia Creek, in order to transfer the wounded rapidly to Washington. Two or three trains had passed safely through, but the guerillas operating on that line had broken the communication, and it became necessary to use all the river transportation that could be made available. Since the first battle of Fredericksburg, however, the Rappahannock had been closed by torpedoes. Fortunately for the wounded, the commander of the river flotilla, Captain Hooker, was the man for the occasion. Prompt, fearless, and resolute, with a few marines he entered one of the towns on the river, arrested a dozen of the more prominent citizens of the place,

confined them on one of his gunboats, and told the authorities that he was going in search of torpedoes. If these men were blown up in removing them, well; but if one of his crew was injured, he would lay the country waste, burn every house and barn, and let the people subsist as they could. And they knew that he would do it. The torpedoes were removed, and the river was opened. The transports followed the fleet, and it was announced that the evacuation of Fredericksburg must be hurried forward as rapidly as possible. Those who could walk, either with or without crutches, were sent forward on foot to Belle Plain. Probably many fell and died by the roadside. We know that many lives would have been saved had it been possible for them to remain quietly where they were. From our own buildings several were sent off who died before they reached the landing; while to remain, was to linger in the hands of an enemy to whose mercy it would not be safe, judging from many past experiences, to trust. The evacuation went on. Our own men were sent away; and when we reached the wharf, the steamers, which were then crowded even to the gangways, were refusing to receive another man. Hundreds were left through the night in a pouring rain. The Sanitary Commission steamer

“Kent” came at last, loaded with stores for the new base; and after the other transports were loaded, we took the remainder, forty stretcher cases, all being amputations, on our decks. The guerrillas came swarming into the town, filling its streets, just too late to catch their prey, appearing at the landing only in time to see the last steamer rapidly moving out of sight and range.

There were many bad cases needing immediate care. We had every facility,—water, basins, sponges, and castile soap, lint and linen bandages,—and went to work. Removing the clotted cloths, bathing and cleansing the stumps, we found three men upon whom it proved necessary to perform secondary amputations to save their lives. All this suffering was borne in utter silence. There was no complaining; each waited for his turn, without appealing to us to pass another by in order to come to him. There was one German lad who could not speak a word of English. He was placed a little out of sight, so that, in the routine of dressing, we had not been to him. Supposing him to be comfortable, from the cheerfulness of his face, and his silence, which had been quite noticeable, he had not been attended to. At last, when I went to him and opened his shirt, a horrible wound was disclosed,

a shell having carried away his arm at the shoulder, together with the fleshy part of his side. The wound was perfectly fresh and healthy, yet the poor fellow was so quiet and submissive to the necessary manipulation in the dressing, that he won the love and admiration of all on board.

As I look back upon these crowded days and nights of sad and exciting experiences, of duties shared and work performed with others, there are most precious memories of companionship with two friends,* who, through death and darkness, with a beautiful fidelity to those whom they were serving, made every hour bright by their self-forgetting cheerfulness and Christian love. Whether amidst the perils of capture by the enemy, or the more insidious dangers of the swamps, their daily routine was unchanged in its serene trustfulness, which gave new strength and confidence to all around them. And when, after unparalleled exposures, it was seen at last that disease had made fearful inroads upon Mrs. M., and they retired with hardly a hope that she would live to reach her home, it became evident, through the twelvemonth of suffering and prostration which followed, how nearly

* Mr. and Mrs. James F. B. Marshall, of Boston.

she had been sacrificed in the absorbing labors of this great campaign. With a lofty consecration to duty, with united loyalty to their work, through fatigue, hunger, and disease, they were enriched by blessings which fell from dying lips and overflowing hearts.

CHAPTER III.

RAPPAHANNOCK AND PAMUNKY.

Port Royal. — Tropical Luxuriance. — Virginia Mocking Birds. — Fire! — The Negroes. — Their Day of Jubilee. — The Contraband Barge. — Their Evening Hymn. — Miss Gilson's Address. — White House. — Arrival of the Tenth and Eighteenth Corps. — The Fortieth Massachusetts. — Lieutenant-Colonel Marshall. — The Battle of Cold Harbor. — The Field of Carnage. — Horrors of Ambulance Transportation. — Field Hospital at White House. — Eight Thousand Wounded. — The Death of Mrs. General Barlow.

PORT ROYAL, an unimportant post village in Caroline County, Virginia, twenty-five miles below Fredericksburg, on the Rappahannock, was, for two or three days, a temporary base of the army. Its quiet harbor was filled with transport steamers and barges, waiting orders to move up the York and Pamunky Rivers, where a new base was to be established nearer Richmond. Here we rested, enjoying the beauty of the river, — its calm, full current flowing smoothly on, reflecting the rich foliage of its shores,

which gently rose into the highlands, now lost in the purple haze of evening. Upon the wide plateau without the town our forces were drawn up in line. The bugles were sounding and drums were beating, while, as the sun went down behind rich masses of clouds that were bathed in a flood of glory, the bands struck up their grand national airs, which were wafted to us on the still breath of this beautiful evening. We landed on the pontoon pier, which was crowded with negroes unloading forage for the twelve hundred and fifty wagons soon to start for the front, and walked up through crowds of soldiers, picking our way among cavalry horses, ambulances, and army teams. The town is one of the quaint old Virginia settlements, the houses embowered in magnificent shade trees, the gardens full of creeping vines and flowers, which peeped through every crevice of the fences, and clambered over windows and verandas, while rich, dark ivy clung to tree and wall, and hung in graceful luxuriance everywhere. The rarest exotics grow here profusely in the open air; and there was a tropical fragrance in the air, a delicious feeling of luxury and repose, which only needed a righteous peace to make the place a paradise. The Virginia mocking birds exceed even the nightingale in the rich variety and sweetness of

their notes. Their joyous trill is never repeated, and they seem to combine in the treasury of their throats the music of all the birds. Evening was coming on. The long twilight of June was very beautiful. The air was calm and still, and the serenity of the night was most impressive. Cool, quiet, and tender, the moon shone upon us; the river was like a mirror, and we floated along with the tide, only steadying our course with the oars, while Venus, the beautiful emerald evening star, kept its quiet vigil over our pleasant hour of rest and recreation.

At midnight the cry of fire started us to our feet, and but a few rods away was a barge of hay burning. The heat of the flames was even then felt upon our decks. The paint would blister, and the wood begin to char, unless we could drop immediately down the stream. Bales of burning hay were dropping off the barge and floating towards us. Our fires were out. Here were forty helpless men depending upon us for succor. The fire soon enveloped the barge, and shot up red and lurid in hot forks of flame. The heat became intense, and it was soon an impossibility to face it. For a time our fate seemed inevitable; the officers of the boat were at their posts, the fires under the boilers were kindling, the steam was slowly rising,

and, at the moment when our position seemed to be the most critical, the beam of the engines moved, and in half an hour we were anchored out of danger. The next day our wounded were transferred to the hospital transport "Connecticut," and were taken to Washington, and our decks were cleared.

As our armies swept through Spottsylvania, Caroline, King William, and Hanover Counties the negroes, by instinct, swarmed to the banks of the rivers. Leaving the old plantations, their masters, and their servitude, dressed as for a festival, and each with his bundle, their only property, they made their way in companies through the desert, like the children of Israel, coming out, as they thought, into the promised land. As we passed down the Rappahannock and up the York and Pamunky Rivers, squads of families could be seen for miles along the banks, making their way they knew not whither, but hoping for escape. As our steamer sped rapidly along, the poor creatures would beg by every gesture of appeal, holding their bundles up, raising their hands as if imploring sympathy, and calling upon us not to pass them by. At Port Royal they flocked down in such numbers that a government barge was appropriated for their use. A thousand were stowed upon her decks, negroes of all

ages, helpless children, and old men and women, all seeking to be free. All their lives long they had dreamed of the day of deliverance. Their rude devotions had expressed it with the wild fervor of their excitable natures; and now the door was opened, and they felt that "de Lord was leading dem along." They were dressed as for a day of jubilee. Freedom was to them an idea. They did not know that it meant opportunity, hardship, and privation; they did not dream of education, development, responsibility. They only knew that it was freedom, and that, in breaking their old relation, there would be no more auction blocks, and no more cruelty.

Our steamer was anchored in the river. A hundred vessels were there waiting orders to move. Night came on. There were gleaming signals all about us, and a thousand colored lights were reflected in the water. In the distance we could hear, low and soft, the first notes of the negroes' evening hymn. Impassioned and plaintive it came on, increasing in its volume, until the whole chorus broke out in one of those indescribably wild, fervid melodies, of which it is impossible to resist the impression, until it melted away into the subdued moanings of a few who were charged with the refrain.

Our boat was soon lowered and filled with an eager company, who wished to reach the barge before their service was over. Clambering up the sides of the great steamer, we found them just settling down to sleep. As we moved about among them, we found enough who were willing to repeat their hymn. Their old preacher addressed them a few words of exhortation, telling them "dese am solemn times," and led them in their song. Like wildfire it spread among them, and soon a thousand voices blended into one. Under the flickering of our single light it was a picture indeed. Their countenances were all aglow with the passion of their song; and as I stood looking upon that sea of uplifted faces, I thought that there was hardly an emotion which could be awakened by intense religious feeling that did not find expression there. There was the rapture of some clear vision, the anguish of some unforgiven sin, the penitence of a lowly spirit; there was the wrestling of some self-accusing soul, or the aspiration of one to whom perfect love had cast out fear; and there they stood in all their untutored simplicity.

When their song had ceased, Miss Gilson addressed them. She pictured the reality of freedom, told them what it meant, and what they would have to do. No

longer would there be a master to deal out the peck of corn, no longer a mistress to care for the old people or the children. They were to work for themselves, provide for their own sick, and support their own infirm; but all this was to be done under new conditions. No overseer was to stand over them with the whip, for their new master was the necessity of earning their daily bread. Very soon new and higher motives would come; fresh encouragements, a nobler ambition, would grow into their new condition. Then in the simplest language she explained the difference between their former relations with the then master and their new relations with the northern people, showing that labor here was voluntary, and that they could only expect to secure kind employers by faithfully doing all they had to do. Then, enforcing truthfulness, neatness, and economy, she said, —

“ You know that the Lord Jesus died and rose again for you. You love to sing his praise and to draw near to him in prayer. But remember that this is not all of religion. You must do right as well as pray right. Your lives must be full of kind deeds towards each other, full of gentle and loving affections, full of unselfishness and truth: this is true piety. You must make Monday and Tuesday just as good and pure as

Sunday is, remembering that God looks not only at your prayers and your emotions, but at the way you live, and speak, and act, every hour of your lives."

Then she sang this exquisite hymn by Whittier: —

"O, praise an' tanks, — de Lord he come

To set de people free;

An' massa tink it day ob doom,

An' we ob jubilee.

De Lord dat heap de Red Sea wabes,

He just as 'trong as den;

He say de word, we last night slabea

To-day de Lord's free men.

We pray de Lord, — he gib us signs

Dat some day we be free;

De norf wind tell it to de pines,

De wild duck to de sea.

We tink it when de church bell ring,

We dream it in de dream;

De rice bird mean it when he sing,

De eagle when he scream.

We know de promise nebber fail,

An' nebber lie de word;

So, like de 'postles in de jail,

We waited for de Lord.

An' now he open ebery door,

An' trow away de key;

He tink we lub him so before,

We lub him better free.

De yam will grow, de cotton blow,

He'll gib de rice and corn;

So nebber you fear, if nebber you hear

De driver blow his horn."

Here were a thousand people breathing their first free air. They were new born with this delicious sense of freedom. They listened with moistened eyes to every word which concerned their future, and felt that its utterance came from a heart which could embrace them all in its sympathies. Life was to them a jubilee only so far as they could make it so by a consciousness of duty faithfully done. They had hard work before them, much privation, many struggles. They had everything to learn — the new industries of the North, their changed social condition, and how to accept their new responsibilities.

As she spoke the circle grew larger, and they pressed round her more eagerly. It was all a part of their new life. They welcomed it; and, by every possible expression of gratitude to her, they showed how desirous they were to learn. Those who were present can never forget the scene — a thousand dusky faces, expressive of such fervency and enthusiasm, their large eyes filled with tears, answering to the throbbing heart below, all dimly outlined by the flickering rays of a single lamp. And when it was over, we felt that we could understand our relations to them, and the new duties which this great hour had brought upon us.

As the campaign progressed, and the army moved towards Richmond, there took place the fiercer conflicts of Spottsylvania Court House and Cold Harbor, with the lesser skirmishes and counter attacks upon alternate lines day by day. Up the Pamunky and York Rivers to White House, and through the poisoned atmosphere of the swamps, the hospital department followed on the great movements of the army, which sent daily its wagon and ambulance trains of wounded to the rear. The variety of high and low lands, the abandoned plantations, ruined houses, and crumbling chimneys, all bearing the marks of the desolations of war, gave a sad picturesqueness to the scenery, which in other days might have been called beautiful.

We reached White House at sunset on the 30th of May. The open plain was filled with troops, which proved to be a part of the army of General Butler, under the command of General W. F. Smith, consisting of the Eighteenth Army Corps and a part of the Tenth. They were just going into camp, having but then arrived on their way to join the Army of the Potomac, which at that moment was not at a greater distance than fifteen miles. It was a brilliant sunset, lighting up with floods of mellow light this great

camping ground, and reflected from thousands of glistening arms. The dress parade was over, and the army was seeking its rest. The camp fires were blazing as night came on; the colored lights from the river fleet were reflected in every dancing ripple, while the sentries moved on their lonely beats, and the din of the camp was hushed and still. Through the night the Medical Director, Dr. Dalton, was upon the ground, selecting a site for the hospital. The highest ground, with a proximity to good water, was the first necessity. Several ample springs were found, an open field was secured near by and easily accessible from the river.

While we were waiting the arrival of the wounded, we went in search of the Fortieth Massachusetts Regiment. The headquarters were under a thick bower of magnolia leaves, and we received a cordial welcome from Lieutenant-Colonel Marshall. The men were resting on their arms, their knapsacks being merely unstrapped, and their guns lying within reach, ready for marching orders. The men were full of spirit and enthusiasm, although in the midst of a severe campaign. They were to enter upon their work again to-morrow, few of them probably realizing that the setting sun of that day was to be the last that many

of them would ever look upon. As we sat in this cool, shady spot, a staff officer rode up with orders to have the regiment prepared to move at a moment's notice, and we left the column ready for its march. The skirmishing previous to the battle of Cold Harbor had begun. The heavy guns were distinctly heard during the morning — that desultory firing, ominous of the coming engagement. The regiment joined its brigade, marched to Cold Harbor, and, before another sun had set, the colonel and one hundred of his brave men were dead and buried on the field. The fire of a genuine patriotism burned in the heart of Colonel Marshall. Bold as a lion, he was as sensitive as a girl. With utter fearlessness in danger, nothing could touch so quickly those finer sensibilities of honor as the slightest intimation of reproach that from any cause he was neglectful of his duty. The life of a skilful officer, of a devoted, earnest, and faithful man, was thrown away in rashly vindicating himself from an aspersion as unjust as it was inconsiderate; and when the noble fellow fell, the tears of his men watered his grave. The brown, haggard soldiers, with powder-stained hands, placed him reverently under the sod, with their comrades who fell at his side.

The sights of a field of carnage must not be

described. But in the rear of it we can see groups of men sitting under trees, or lying in agony, having crawled to some shady spot, to a brook-side or ravine, where they may bathe their fevered wounds or quench their thirst, while waiting their turn to be removed in ambulances to the hospital. The Sanitary Commission's supply wagons, which have been pushed forward to the field, are stationed where they can afford the most relief. Many sufferers are necessarily passed by; but how many an exhausted man has lived to tell the story of the Commission's timely ministry, but for which he would have been numbered with the dead. In the ambulances are concentrated probably more acute suffering than may be seen in the same space in all this world beside. The worst cases only have the privilege of transportation; and what a privilege! A privilege of being violently tossed from side to side, of having one of the four who occupy the vehicle together thrown bodily, perhaps, upon a gaping wound; of being tortured, and racked, and jolted, when each jarring of the ambulance is enough to make the sympathetic brain burst with agony. How often have I stood on the step behind, and heard the cry, "O God, release me from this agony!" and then some poor stump would be jolted from its place,

and be brought smartly up against the wooden framework of the wagon, while tears would gather in the eyes and roll down over furrowed cheeks. And then some poor fellow would take a suspender and tie it to the wagon top, and hold to that, in order to break the effect of the jolting ambulance, as it careened from side to side, or went ploughing on through roads rendered almost impassable by the enormous transportation service of the army. And yet, as a class, these ambulance drivers were humane men. I have been with them at their camp fires, and have shared their rough evening meal; I have seen their carefulness and skill in driving, and have wondered sometimes at the tender considerateness with which they ministered to their suffering comrades, when their life of hardship and their rough associations would have such tendency to make them insensible. It was stated that never before in any campaign of the Army of the Potomac had army wagons been called into use for the transportation of wounded men; yet, day after day, the trains passed through Fredericksburg, as they were at that moment arriving at White House, with their living freights of suffering men.

The dead at Cold Harbor were left unburied, and the wounded were rapidly sent to White House, where

eight thousand arrived before a hospital was established to receive them. The vast plateau was, however, soon covered with tents; kitchens and feeding stations were established, and the regular routine of hospital work went on. In looking back upon this hospital encampment at White House, and all the sufferings experienced there, its distinctive features are lost in the recollection of agonizing sights and sounds, and in the sense of accumulating duties, of sleepless nights, of days crowded with painful experiences, of heart and brain overwhelmed with the effort to relieve so much suffering. When the army crossed the James, on the 14th of June, and White House was evacuated, the whole equipage of the hospital was transported to City Point, which was to remain the base until the war should close. Through tropical heat and drenching showers this holy work went on, until many were stricken down with miasmatic fevers, — some, alas! to die, and others to approach so near to death as to hear the rustle of the angels' wings.

Of our own more immediate party, Mrs. General Barlow was the only one who died. Her exhausting work at Fredericksburg, where the largest powers of administration were displayed, left but a small measure of vitality with which to encounter the severe

exposures of the poisoned swamps of the Pamunky, and the malarious districts of City Point. Here, in the open field, she toiled with Mr. Marshall and Miss Gilson, under the scorching sun, with no shelter from the pouring rains, with no thought but for those who were suffering and dying all around her. On the battle-field of Petersburg, hardly out of range of the enemy, and at night witnessing the blazing lines of fire from right to left, among the wounded, with her sympathies and powers of both mind and body strained to the last degree, neither conscious that she was working beyond her strength, nor realizing the extreme exhaustion of her system, she fainted at her work, and found, only when it was too late, that the raging fever was wasting her life away. It was strength of will which sustained her in this intense activity, when her poor, tired body was trying to assert its own right to repose. Yet to the last, her sparkling wit, her brilliant intellect, her unfailing good humor, lighted up our moments of rest and recreation. So many memories of her beautiful constancy and self-sacrifice, of her bright and genial companionship, of her rich and glowing sympathies, of her warm and loving nature, come back to me, that I feel how inadequate would be any tribute I could pay to her worth.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SANITARY COMMISSION.

What becomes of its Money?— Its Operation at Fredericksburg.— Hospital Issues.— The Work of the Commission.— Its Enlargement as the War went on.— The Death Rates of the Army contrasted with the English in the Crimea.— General Relief.— Special Relief.— The Auxiliary Relief Corps.— Its Organization.— Personal Relief.— Hon. Frank B. Fay.— Relief Chests.— Their Contents.

IT would be clearly impossible in a few paragraphs to condense all that might be said of the Sanitary Commission. Its service embraced all those more immediate necessities of the soldier, of personal relief, both in the field and in the hospital, and included in its operations a vast aggregate of good, out of the army, which never met the public eye. Its various departments in the field; its bureaus in Washington, Philadelphia, and New York; its beneficent operations all over the continent, wherever a soldier's comfort was to be provided for, or his interests were to be pro-

tected, need a volume for the record ; and if the story is ever told, it will be one of the brightest pages in our national history. In the operations of this vast campaign it was foremost in everything. It reached the new base as soon as there were soldiers to protect it. It was at work preparing for hospitals and providing necessary stores before the government machinery began to move ; and its red flags were seen everywhere with the stars and stripes, establishing its feeding stations and its depots of supplies. It was made supplementary to the government ; and thus, in emergencies of great suffering, or when starvation threatened to add its horrors to the miseries of the wounded, the Commission was at hand with its medicines, morphine, or chloroform, saving by them as many lives as by its stimulants and food. In this campaign the most perfect understanding existed between the Medical Director, Dr. Dalton, and the gentlemen in charge of the Commission. He liberally answered requisitions, granted concessions, offered facilities to its agents, and promoted its efficiency in every way, and thus vast suffering was relieved through the harmonious blending of the two agencies. The unselfish and devoted heroism of surgeons, both regular and volunteer, the prompt and the careful and humane performance of

their duties, have led many to say, that no campaign since the war commenced had seen such thorough faithfulness in the pressing cares and responsibilities of their positions, while never before had there been known such variety or severity of wounds.

A natural question, "What becomes of the money of the Sanitary Commission?" was often asked. It was felt that the large balances, at various times known to be in the treasury of the Commission, should prove sufficient until the war should close. Try to realize the necessary comforts to be supplied to a hundred wounded men. Consider the rolls of clothing, shirts, drawers, and stockings; the pillows and pads for stumps; the bed-ticks, slings, and bed-pans; the tents, blankets, and slippers, fans and basins, sponges, drinking-cups and spoons, — each man requiring more or less of all of these, and a hundred things beside, for his outward comfort, — and then consider the articles of food, including every necessary stimulant, — oranges, lemons, soft crackers, oatmeal for gruel, farina, cordials, canned and dried fruits, and meats and vegetables, condensed milk and coffee, sugar and tobacco, eggs and crackers, — and all this, not for one man, nor a hundred, nor a thousand, but for tens of thousands, in one department only of the vast

campaign. It is also to be remembered that in Virginia the work was not simply with nor in the midst of the army, nor only upon the battle-fields; it was spread over vast tracts of country through which the army moved, where wounded men had been left in the woods or uninhabited plains. Its stations were established not only where it was known there would be want, but where there might be a possibility of need, requiring comprehensive forethought, prompt and energetic action, and unwearied labor in infinite detail. Of some articles the requirements were enormous. Condensed milk by the ton; shirts by tens of thousands; ice by the cargo; and so on, with the long list of supplies. And this material had to be transported by wagon trains from one base to another; horses were to be purchased, their forage provided, drivers to be paid, steamers to be chartered, and coal procured. It was a gigantic machinery, and as beneficent in its working as it was vast in its proportions. The cash expenditure for the month of May, 1864, was \$250,000; and this did not include the material contributed gratuitously, nor the supplies sent to the central depots as a gift.

The work at Fredericksburg was carefully subdivided; one hundred and fifty agents were assigned

to the various Corps Hospitals, each responsible to the chief of the corps, Hon. Frank B. Fay reporting to him for instructions, and drawing through him their supplies. The central storehouse was supplied daily by the wagon trains which were loaded at Belle Plain; but such was the demand for stores, that no sooner had an invoice been unloaded, than boxes, barrels, and shelves were emptied to answer the pressing calls. On one occasion, within ten days, 28,763 pieces of dry goods, shirts, towels, bed-ticks, and pillows were sent and issued; while upon another occasion were issued in sixty days of

Hospital Furniture and Personal Clothing.

| | | | |
|-------------------------|--------|------------------------|--------|
| Quilts, | 30,197 | Drawers, | 48,303 |
| Blankets, | 13,500 | Socks, | 80,322 |
| Sheets, | 42,945 | Slippers, | 14,984 |
| Pillows, | 35,877 | Handkerchiefs, | 43,606 |
| Pillow-cases, | 49,906 | Towels, | 65,164 |
| Pillow-ticks, | 2,269 | Wrappers, | 10,235 |
| Bed-ticks, | 11,716 | Flannel Bands, | 3,684 |
| Shirts, | 87,994 | | |

To a mind oppressed by contemplating the horrors of war, the Sanitary Commission alone seemed to shed a gleam of sunshine over the dismal scene. Men blessed it with their dying breath; they prayed for it as they lay weak and weary; and one man, just before

he died, said, "Here is my pocket-book : give its contents to the Sanitary Commission."

Let us not doubt the refining influence of suffering. Every day we were made stronger for duty by the beautiful revelations of character which this heavy trial had brought out. Men of roughest exterior, who had faced death in every form, who were grim and fearless in battle, and who had seemed utterly destitute of the finer sensibilities, when lying in pain, would become as quiet, and gentle, and subdued as children ; as patient, resigned, and even hopeful, as any saint who had overcome all things in the discipline of life. A fact of this kind was brought to my notice. A wounded soldier, worn with heavy marches, wounds, and camp disease, died in the hospital in perfect peace. Some, who witnessed his sweet patience and content through great languor and weariness, fancied sometimes that they "could already see the brilliant particles of a halo above his head." Before he died, he is said to have written this touching little hymn : —

"I lay me down to sleep
With little thought or care
Whether my waking find
Me here or there !

A bowing, burdened head,
That only asks to rest

Unquestioning upon
A loving breast.

My good right hand forgets
Its cunning now;
To march the weary march
I know not how.

I am not eager, bold,
Nor strong. All that is past.
I am ready not to do
At last, at last.

My half day's work is done,
And this is all my part:
I give a patient God
My patient heart,—

And grasp his banner still,
Though all its blue be dim;
These stripes, no less than stars,
Lead after him."

The work of the Commission embraced, in the first place, the sanitary concerns of the army, the means of preserving the health and securing the general efficiency of the troops in the field and their comfort in the hospitals. Ventilation of tents, drainage of camps, and all of those healthful measures in an army, the neglect of which is seen in frightful rates of mortality, received attention. To illustrate briefly the value of this work of the Commission, the contrast is presented between the annual death rate of the English forces in

the Crimean war and that of our own armies. "In the Crimea it increased from 129 per 1000 men per annum, to 1174 per 1000 men per annum, of which 97 per cent. was from disease." In other words, in order to supply the loss by death alone, it would be necessary to replace the dead army by a new one of equal strength in forty-four weeks. At this point the English government began to establish sanitary operations; and within a year from their full operation the rate was reduced to 25 per 1000 men. Another statement of this Crimean mortality is as follows: "The percentage of deaths (46.7 per cent. in the hospitals of Scutari and Koulali, in February, 1855) was nearly as great as the percentage of recoveries. But that alarming mortality was speedily checked by specific sanitary works, so that the death rate fell to two or three per cent. in the same hospitals of cases treated." On the other hand, in our own armies, as the tabular statements show, the loss averaged 65 per 1000 men, the result, unquestionably, of the promptness with which the Commission met the great question which was presented to them by the frightful experiences in the last great European war; and it may with justice claim its full share of agency in this successful result.

Then followed the work of General Relief, or the system of current supply in the field. Its first effort was made after the battle of Ball's Bluff, and during the winter of 1861-2. Its history embraces every active campaign in every department, and its operation became more widely known, from the fact that it was the administration of the Field Relief, which included the distribution of stores, and, to some extent, those ministrations of relief which have so deeply touched the hearts of the people. Still later was organized the Special Relief, a department for the care of discharged soldiers, though other work was connected with it. Homes, lodges, and soldiers' rests were established all over the country; a pension agency, with its branches in every large city; a bureau for the gratuitous collection of back pay and the settlement of deceased soldiers' accounts; and employment agencies, from which has accrued a vast amount of good to soldiers and to their families in thousands of instances.

Next in order, but not less important, was the Auxiliary Relief Corps, which, combining all the essential points of the Field Relief, was yet a step in advance of that, as it attempted a personal ministry to the soldier, in addition to its distribution of supplies.

And this department made the work of the whole more complete, gave it more significance and a richer fruitfulness; for it had in it an abundant wealth of love. Its history, if brief, is yet brilliant with heroism, and deeply impressive with the records of suffering and death, which were the result of the gigantic campaign which ended around Petersburg and Richmond. I do not wish to claim for the corps more than may be justly awarded by an impartial judgment; but since the first battles of the war, I believe that no organization has rendered more effective service among sick or wounded men than this corps has since its inception and operation after the battles of the Wilderness. In the winter of 1863-4, the Hon. Frank B. Fay, after more than two years in an independent position in the field, saw that a department of *personal relief* could be ingrafted upon the Sanitary Commission; that it would become one of its most vital branches, and would vastly alleviate suffering in the new spring campaign then soon to be opened. Accordingly an Auxiliary Relief Corps was organized, and began its operations at Fredericksburg after the battles of the Wilderness and Spottsylvania Court House. Until this campaign the Sanitary Commission had never attempted systematic personal service

or contact with the soldier. Its work in the field had been mainly the distribution of supplies upon requisitions from the surgeons. Its wagons were with the various divisions of the army, moving with its movements, at hand always upon the battle-field to make good the deficiency of medical supplies which had fallen short, or from any cause were not within reach of the surgeons. But no systematic personal relief of the soldier had ever been attempted until Mr. Fay organized this Auxiliary Relief Corps to do such work as he had done individually from the earliest campaigns of the war. Its organization was briefly as follows: In connection with each corps hospital there was a relief station, having from four to eight agents, under the direction of one who acted as captain. These stations consisted of a store-tent, a sleeping and mess-room, a tent for reading and writing; and, in one instance, a school and a chapel were established for convalescent soldiers, which proved a valuable kind of work among the men, who showed their eagerness for such instruction and influence by prompt and faithful attendance. The barge, or central storehouse of the Commission, issued supplies daily upon requisitions to each of these stations. The chief of the Auxiliary Corps had a supervision of the whole work, assigned

new men to their posts, issued general directions for the government of the corps, and, occupying an administrative position, kept the machinery running, by which an effective service might be rendered to the sick or wounded who were placed under its care. The supplies were always issued under the direction of the surgeons, but, being personally distributed, more surely reached individual cases than if given to detailed ward-masters or intrusted to hospital stewards. This personal service included all those pleasant companionships and ministrations which cheered the lonely hospital inmate, a daily and hourly intercourse, which entered into his life and supplied his particular need. Earnest men found enough to do, enough for heart and hand, enough for their ingenuity, enough for their patience, and enough for their Christian charity. This contact with the soldier opened up a great wealth and variety of experience. Away from the hospitals it is impossible to realize how these electric currents run along the invisible wires of sympathy; how men are drawn together; how close and tender their relations may become; how such service enriches the man who gives and the man who receives; and how very often a life has been changed, and lifted up, and renewed by the outflowing of the heart, and the personal devotion

of a stranger to one who needed all a sister's or a mother's care. Personal intercourse, — I lay stress upon this, — intercourse which reached down to every need of the soldier ; which supplied food for the mind, for the soul, and for the body ; intercourse which was companionship in loneliness, which was cheerfulness in homesickness, which was strength in weakness, which was spiritual comfort and peace in any dark hour, and which could light the way by its heavenly benedictions and its words of lofty cheer from One who has trod the dark valley, and who has illumined it for all time to those who are to cross it in the light of his sacred presence.

I know the value of this service, and I know the appreciation in which men in direst suffering have held it. The rolls of the Auxiliary Corps have borne the names of some four hundred men who at different times entered the service. But mere statistics give no idea of the magnitude of the work. Over 20,000 at Fredericksburg, over 2000 at Port Royal, over 20,000 at White House, over 60,000 at City Point, and not less than 20,000 at Point of Rocks — more than 120,000 sick and wounded men, not to mention the great aggregate of those soldiers who have been cared

for at the feeding stations, which number is probably not less than one fourth as many more. The corps has worked, as I have had occasion to know, until its members have dropped into their graves; signal loyalty to the service has kept others at their post until they have been overtaken by disease; through miasma, fever, malaria, and contagion they have labored until many have ruined their constitutions, and have returned enfeebled to their homes to die, and all for the cause which they loved so well. Of the labors of Mr. Fay, the chief of the corps, it would be hard to speak in terms of too much praise; and the only difficulty in making reference at all to it is the fear that any fair statement of his service may seem to be too much the language of personal admiration. I prefer, rather, to let the memory of all his wise and gentle ministries, his kindly and self-forgetting service, be kept fresh in one more heart, of all the thousands who have had such good reasons for treasuring it. The untiring fidelity with which his labors in this direction of personal relief in the army were continued, probably had no parallel in any other individual case. Before he entered the Sanitary Commission, Mayor Fay was known in every division and brigade of the Army of the

Potomac ; and soldiers representing every state, and probably nearly every county of the loyal North, have at some time been the recipients of his kindly ministry or his generous aid. With characteristic foresight he was always prepared and was early upon the field of battle with his stores, replenished for the emergency, and with all these blessed appliances of healing moved among the dead and wounded, soothing helpless, suffering, and bleeding men, parched with fever, crazed with thirst, or lying neglected in the last agonies of death. And this service was performed with such humility and tenderness of spirit as is rarely combined with the self-contained force of a matured and disciplined mind. Notwithstanding the delicacy of his position, and the jealousies easily awakened by those in authority who were scrupulous of official dignity, and careful as to forms, I believe that in no instance did he conflict with any ruling medical power, or receive anything but the respect and cordial good will of those under whom he labored.

In the winter of 1864 Mr. Fay retired from the Commission, continuing, however, his work independently until the war closed. Mr. A. M. Sperry succeeded him as chief of the Auxiliary Corps, who,

since the opening of the war, had rendered service in some form in the good cause. His experience in the work of personal relief, his gentleness of spirit, his tenderness with the men, his warm, earnest, and sympathetic nature, pointed to him as the man of all others in the corps to take the vacant place; and such satisfaction did he give to those in authority, that, in the concentration of the armies around Washington, after the surrender of Lee and Johnson, he was placed in charge of the "Field Relief" of this vast body of men — a responsibility and a work which he assumed and carried through with discretion and liberality.

Among other arrangements for the campaign was the preparation by Mr. Fay, at the expense of the Commission, of twelve relief chests, which were carefully provided with a great variety of stores and utensils for hospital use, which his experience had suggested, and which were packed with great ingenuity and skill. They proved invaluable as a temporary supply. With an admirable adjustment of the proportions of the various articles needed, it will be seen that hardly anything was omitted which could contribute to a soldier's comfort in any condition in which he might be found.

Into a space of fourteen cubic feet the following articles were compressed, the list having been made of the articles as they were unpacked at Fredericksburg: —

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 6 cans of tomatoes, | 1 bottle mustard, |
| 6 " of chicken, | 25 nutmegs, |
| 6 " of mutton, | 1 bottle Cayenne pepper, |
| 12 " of milk, | 2 bottles pepper, |
| 6 lbs. of farina, | 1 box salt, |
| 3 lbs. of meal, | 6 shirts, |
| 6 papers of broma, | 13 pairs of drawers, |
| 1 pail of butter (6 lbs.), | 8 pair socks. |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ can of crackers, | 2 dozen handkerchiefs |
| 2 lbs. coffee, | 5 arm slings, |
| 1 lb. tea, | 4 pair slippers, |
| 3 lbs. sugar, | 6 boxes troches, |
| 4 bottles whiskey, | 6 " Russia salve, |
| 2 " brandy, | 6 empty vials, |
| 2 " cider, | 12 boxes matches, |
| 2 " sherry, | 1 paper tacks, |
| 1 bottle cider vinegar, | 6 lbs. nails, |
| 1 " raspberry vinegar, | 1 ball twine, |
| 1 " cologne water, | A lot of bandages, |
| 1 " bay rum, | A lot of comfort bags, |
| 2 bottles Jamaica ginger, | A lot of night-caps, |
| 1 bottle brown ginger, | 1 roll of oil silk, |
| 6 bottles extract of almonds, | 2 pillow-sacks, |
| 4 " " of vanilla, | 2 padded rings, |
| 2 " " of lemon, | 1 piece of netting, |
| 2 " " of ink, | 2 bed-ticks, |
| 4 papers hops, | $\frac{1}{2}$ ream of paper, |
| 2 dozen lemons, | 1 dozen pen-holders, |

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 dozen pencils, | 6 teacups and saucers, |
| 1 box pens, | 2 tin tumblers, |
| 250 envelopes, | 2 tunnels, |
| 12 cakes of soap, | 2 toasting-irons, |
| 6 sponges, | 2 basting-spoons, |
| 12 dozen pipes, | 12 large spoons, |
| 1 box candles, | 12 teaspoons, |
| 1 roll of wire, | 1 butcher's knife, |
| 1 box of combs, | 6 knives and forks, |
| 6 sheets of wrapping-paper, | 1 basin, |
| 1 blacking-brush, | 1 handsaw, |
| 12 papers tobacco, | 1 hatchet, |
| 1 dozen towels, | 1 hammer, |
| 1 dish-pan (3 gallons), | 2 pocket looking-glasses, |
| 1 baking-pan, | 1 nutmeg-grater, |
| 1 dozen deep tin plates, | 1 brush broom, |
| 1 " tin plates, | 1 corkscrew, |
| 1 tin cup, | 2 candlesticks. |

This brief review of the Sanitary Commission exhibits but an outline of its organization. Some day its history will be written, but even that will give but a faint conception of the magnitude and importance of the work it has accomplished. As has been so well said, "Never, till every soldier whose last moments it has soothed, till every soldier whose flickering life it has gently steadied into continuance, whose waning reason it has softly lulled into quiet, whose chilled blood it has warmed into healthful play, whose failing frame it has nourished into strength, whose fainting

heart it has comforted with sympathy, — never, until every soul has poured out its story of gratitude and thanksgiving will its history be complete ; but long before that time, ever since its helping hand was first held forth, comes the blessed voice, ‘Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.’ ”

CHAPTER V.

A WOMAN'S MINISTRY.

The Battle of Petersburg. — The Colored Hospital at City Point. — Hospital Kitchens in Virginia and the Crimea. — Her Influence in the Wards.

THE battle of Cold Harbor demonstrated the fact that Richmond could be carried from that line only by an enormous expenditure of life, if at all; and the army was rapidly transferred across the James, making heavy assaults on Petersburg on the 15th, 16th, 17th, and 18th of June, which resulted in gaining important ground, but failed to give an entrance into the city.

Up to this time the colored troops had taken but a passive part in the campaign. They were now first brought into action in front of Petersburg, when the fighting was so desperately contested that many thousands were left upon the field. The wounded were brought down rapidly to City Point, where a tempo-

rary hospital had been provided. It was, however, in no other sense a hospital, than that it was a depot for wounded men. There were defective management and chaotic confusion. The men were neglected, the hospital organization was imperfect, and the mortality was in consequence frightfully large. Their condition was horrible. The severity of the campaign in a malarious country had prostrated many with fevers, and typhoid, in its most malignant forms, was raging with increasing fatality.

These stories of suffering reached Miss Gilson at a moment when the previous labors of the campaign had nearly exhausted her strength ; but her duty seemed plain. There were no volunteers for the emergency, and she prepared to go. Her friends declared that she could not survive it ; but replying that she could not die in a cause more sacred, she started out alone. A hospital had to be created, and this required all the tact, finesse, and diplomacy of which a woman is capable. Official prejudice and professional pride had to be met and overcome. A new policy had to be introduced, and it had to be done without seeming to interfere. Her doctrine and practice always were instant, silent, and cheerful obedience to medical and disciplinary orders, without any qualification whatever ;

and by this she overcame the natural sensitiveness of the medical authorities.

A hospital kitchen had to be organized upon her method of special diet ; nurses had to learn her way, and be educated to their duties ; while cleanliness, order, system, had to be enforced in the daily routine. Moving quietly on with her work of renovation, she took the responsibility of all changes that became necessary ; and such harmony prevailed in the camp that her policy was vindicated as time rolled on. The rate of mortality was lessened, and the hospital was soon considered the best in the department. This was accomplished by a tact and energy which sought no praise, but modestly veiled themselves behind the orders of officials. The management of her kitchen was like the ticking of a clock — regular discipline, gentle firmness, and sweet temper always. The diet for the men was changed three times a day ; and it was her aim to cater as far as possible to the appetites of individual men. Her daily rounds in the wards brought her into personal intercourse with every patient, and she knew his special need. At one time, when nine hundred men were supplied from her kitchen (with seven hundred rations daily), I took down her diet list for one dinner, and give it here

in a note,* to show the variety of the articles, and her careful consideration of the condition of separate men.

The following passage from the pen of Harriet Martineau, in regard to the management of the kitchen at Scutari by Florence Nightingale, is true also of those organized by Miss Gilson in Virginia. The parallel is so close, and the illustration of the daily administration of this department of her work so vivid, that, if the circumstances under which it was written were not known, I should have said it was a faithful

* List of rations in the Colored Hospital at City Point, being a dinner on Wednesday, April 25, 1865:—

| | |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| Roast Beef, | Tomatoes, |
| Shad, | Tea, |
| Veal Broth, | Coffee, |
| Stewed Oysters, | Toast, |
| Beef Tea, | Gruel, |
| Mashed Potatoes, | Scalded Milk, |
| Lemonade, | Crackers and Sherry Cobbler, |
| Apple Jelly, | Roast Apple. |
| Farina Pudding, | |

Let it not be supposed that this was an ordinary hospital diet. Although such a list was furnished at this time, yet it was only possible while the hospital had an ample base, like City Point. The armies, when operating at a distance, could give but two or three articles; and in active campaigns these were furnished with great irregularity.

picture of our kitchen in the Colored Hospital at City Point : —

“The very idea of that kitchen was savory in the wards; for out of it came, at the right moment, arrowroot, hot and of the pleasantest consistence; rice puddings, neither hard on the one hand nor clammy on the other; cool lemonade for the feverish; cans full of hot tea for the weary, and good coffee for the faint. When the sinking sufferer was lying with closed eyes, too feeble to make moan or sign, the hospital spoon was put between his lips, with the mouthful of strong broth or hot wine, which rallied him till the watchful nurse came round again. The meat from that kitchen was tenderer than any other, the beef tea was more savory. One thing that came out of it was the lesson on the saving of good cookery. The mere circumstance of the boiling water being really boiling there, made a difference of two ounces of rice in every four puddings, and of more than half the arrowroot used. The same quantity of arrowroot which made a pint thin and poor in the general kitchen, made two pints thick and good in Miss Nightingale’s.”

Again, in contrasting the general kitchen with the light or special diet prepared for the sicker men, there was all the difference between having placed before

them "the cold mutton chop with its opaque fat, the beef with its caked gravy, the arrowroot stiff and glazed, all untouched, as might be seen by the bed-sides in the afternoons, while the patients were lying back, sinking for want of support," and seeing "the quick and quiet nurses enter as the clock struck, with their hot water tins, hot morsels ready cut, bright knife, and fork, and spoon, — and all ready for instant eating!"

The nurses looked for Miss Gilson's word of praise, and labored for it; and she had only to suggest a variety in the decoration of the tents to stimulate a most honorable rivalry among them, which soon opened a wide field for displaying ingenuity and taste, so that not only was its standard the highest, but it was the most cheerfully picturesque hospital at City Point.

This Colored Hospital service was one of those extraordinary tasks, out of the ordinary course of army hospital discipline, that none but a woman could execute. It required more than a man's power of endurance, for men fainted and fell under the burden. It required a woman's discernment, a woman's tenderness, a woman's delicacy and tact; it required such

nerve and moral force, and such executive power, as are rarely united in any woman's character. The simple grace with which she moved about the hospital camps, the gentle dignity with which she ministered to the suffering about her, won all hearts. As she passed through the wards the men would follow her with their eyes, attracted by the grave sweetness of her manner; and when she stopped by some bedside, and laid her hand upon the forehead and smoothed the hair of a soldier, speaking some cheering, pleasant word, I have seen the tears gather in his eyes, and his lip quiver, as he tried to speak or to touch the fold of her dress, as if appealing to her to listen, while he opened his heart about the mother, wife, or sister far away. I have seen her in her sober gray flannel gown, sitting motionless by the dim candle-light,—which was all our camp could afford,—with her eyes open and watchful, and her hands ever ready for all those endless wants of sickness at night, especially sickness that may be tended unto death, or unto the awful struggle between life and death, which it was the lot of nearly all of us at some time to keep watch over until the danger had gone by. And in sadder trials, when the life of a soldier whom she had watched and ministered

to was trembling in the balance between earth and heaven, waiting for Him to make all things new, she has seemed, by some special grace of the spirit, to reach the living Christ, and draw a blessing down as the shining way was opened to the tomb. And I have seen such looks of gratitude from weary eyes, now brightened by visions of heavenly glory, the last of many recognitions of her ministry. Absorbed in her work, unconscious of the spiritual beauty which invested her daily life, — whether in her kitchen, in the heat and overcrowding incident to the issues of a large special diet list, or sitting at the cot of some poor lonely soldier, whispering of the higher realities of another world, — she was always the same presence of grace and love, of peace and benediction. I have been with her in the wards where the men have craved some simple religious service, — the reading of Scripture, the repetition of a psalm, the singing of a hymn, or the offering of a prayer, — and invariably the men were melted to tears by the touching simplicity of her eloquence.

These were the tokens of her ministry among the sickest men; but it was not here alone that her influence was felt in the hospital. Was there jealousy

in the kitchen, her quick penetration detected the cause, and in her gentle way harmony was restored ; was there profanity among the convalescents, her daily presence and kindly admonition or reproof, with an occasional glance which spoke her sorrow for such sin, were enough to check the evil ; or was there hardship or discontent, the knowledge that she was sharing the discomfort too, was enough to compel patient endurance until a remedy could be provided. And so, through all the war, from the seven days' conflict upon the Peninsula, in those early July days of 1862, through the campaigns of Antietam and Fredericksburg, of Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, and after the conflicts of the Wilderness, and the fierce and undecided battles which were fought for the possession of Richmond and Petersburg, in 1864 and 1865, she labored steadfastly on until the end. Through scorching heat and pinching cold, in the tent or upon the open field, in the ambulance or on the saddle, through rain and snow, amid unseen perils of the enemy, under fire upon the field, or in the more insidious dangers of contagion, she worked quietly on, doing her simple part with all womanly tact and skill, until now the hospital dress is laid aside, and she rests, with the sense of a

noble work done, with the blessing and prayers of hundreds whose sufferings she has relieved or whose lives she has saved, being,

**"In the great history of the land,
A noble type of good
Heroic womanhood."**

CHAPTER VI.

CITY POINT FIELD HOSPITALS.

City Point. — Medical Director, Dr. Edward B. Dalton. — General Grant. — Negroes' Evening Service. — Sermon of a Colored Sergeant.

CITY POINT, the magnificent base of our armies, claims a word of notice. Although in former days it must have been sleepy enough, even with the commerce of Richmond in its streets, it is now wide awake. A new civilization follows on in the track of war. If any of the F. F. V.'s are left to claim their own, they would never know it to be the same place. Through all its ceaseless activity I never saw one of the old inhabitants. The few scattering houses were monopolized by clerks of commissaries and provost marshals; new buildings filled out the streets, — rough pine shanties, markets, sutlers' shops, clothing stores, ambrotype saloons, hotels, and chapels, — like the mushroom growth of Pike's Peak or California. The

headquarters of General Grant were on a bluff at the junction of the James and the Appomattox, where these rivers open out like a lake, while beyond were the rich abandoned plantations, and the low fertile plains, all trampled over by the foot of war. An old villa, with its wide veranda, all green and beautiful amidst its clinging vines, served as the office for General Ingalls, the chief quartermaster of the army; while upon the lawn, under spreading oaks, were plain log huts, the camping ground of the lieutenant-general. Here, puffing his cigar with that comfortable repose of manner which many have mistaken for dullness, with nothing but his three stars to attract the notice of a stranger, he moved about his headquarters, keeping his own counsel, developing silently his own plans, to be seen at any time, and easy to be approached by all.

He deals with all questions in a plain, business-like manner, with the least show of feeling, and with that plain common sense which decides on the instant, and then dismisses the subject from the mind. His undemonstrativeness had nothing repulsive about it, for he made and retained many strong friends. With none of that showy pretension which sometimes wins the personal devotion of an army, General Grant, by

the kindness and consideration with which he listens to the humblest soldier, gained that enduring confidence of his men which no reverses could destroy.

A colored sergeant in our hospital, whose mother was dying, wished a furlough. The application, if made in the ordinary routine, would be too late; he therefore went to headquarters, and found the general engaged with a member of his staff. Turning to the soldier, he said, "Well, sergeant?"

The man stated his case briefly, and when he finished, the general looked him steadily in the eye with that same penetration which always places men just where they belong, and immediately directed his adjutant-general to make out a thirty days' furlough. When it was ready the general handed it to the sergeant, took his hand, and, shaking it, kindly said, —

"Sergeant, I hope you'll find your mother living when you get home," which could bring no response from the poor colored soldier except a choking "God bless you, general."

The wharves were built parallel with the river half a mile in length, and with storehouses containing the subsistence, forage, ammunition, and equipment of the army. Here were steamers and vessels of every description discharging; the freight was rapidly loaded

into cars, which moved out in long, heavy trains to the front, and there was the greatest activity everywhere.

The road to the hospitals led us by the Bull Ring, the picturesque camp of the Fifteenth Regiment of New York Engineers, the wagon train camps, corrals for mules and horses, long stables of brushwood, thatched with boughs of evergreen, groups of low huts for the wagoners, while cavalrymen were clanking along on their jaded beasts; ambulances, army teams, and artillery, half obscured in suffocating clouds of dust (which, in this dry summer, was nearly twelve inches deep), completed the picture.

Dr. Edward B. Dalton, the Medical Director, held his position since the commencement of the campaign in May. At Fredericksburg, at White House, and through all the terrible emergencies of that experience, he had displayed eminent administrative ability; and this was now exercised at City Point. With every facility furnished by a magnificent army base, and after the experience of four years, he so adjusted the complicated machinery of hospital administration as to leave his mark upon the field hospital system, which, in the previous history of the war, had never been brought to such perfection. His wise forethought and skill, his delicate tact in quietly overcoming diffi-

culties, his sound judgment in matters of detail, his decision and firmness of purpose, his scientific accomplishments, his genial and kindly manners, won for him the confidence of his superior officers, and the cordial good-will of all who were brought into official relations with him.

The Depot Field Hospitals were situated a mile from the landing, upon a wide plateau, extending back from the Appomattox, and were divided into the Second, Fifth, Sixth, Ninth, and Cavalry Corps Hospitals, representing each corps of the Army of the Potomac. A branch railroad, running directly through the centre of the hospital grounds, was constructed from the main military line, in order that the sick or wounded sent in from the division hospitals at the front might avoid ambulance transportation, and thus be taken directly from the cars and laid upon their hospital beds.

Connected with each hospital were a dispensary, a commissary storehouse, general and special diet kitchens, together with the convalescents' dining-room. The Sanitary Commission also established a station in each corps. These stations were supplied by daily requisitions from the barge, the central storehouse, and the headquarters of the Commission at this point. Each

hospital had accommodations for from fifteen hundred to two thousand men. Through the summer months it was a vast encampment of tents, which were changed, as winter approached, to log barracks with boarded roofs, an even temperature being more easily maintained in them than under canvas coverings. Every fanciful decoration which the ingenuity of nurses or ward-masters could suggest was carried out. Some were of most unique design, executed with taste and skill; festoons of many-colored papers covering the rough walls, arched over the beds, or hanging gracefully over windows and doors, so that there was an air of bright and cheerful cleanliness, which was always refreshing.

The chaplain of the hospital was Orderly Sergeant Morgan, of the Forty-third United States colored troops, an eloquent preacher, a man of most earnest and devout spirit, and of unquestioned ability.

Just before evening service, Juba, with a face all aglow with expectation, came scratching at the tent. Entering, with hat in hand, he said, "Thar's a new preacher in de camp, and I's jes' studyin' if I can get to go dis evenin'?" So Juba went. Following on, I passed long lines of blackened tents, cheerless and cold; grim suffering was everywhere; the curling

smoke was issuing from the kitchens; the guard were patrolling on their lonely beat; nurses were moving about in their monotonous toil, while the pattering rain and the soggy Virginia mud sent through me a chilly homesickness and sense of desolation not easily described. Groping through the darkness, yet guided by the low, plaintive air of their opening hymn, I reached their rude hut of logs, used as the wash-house of the hospital, as well as for their place of worship. On such occasions this was always crowded with its dusky congregation, gathered as it was within the limits of the colored hospital. The building was about fifty feet in length, the crevices cemented with mud, the roof being made of canvas, and the interior left rough and cheerless. Lanterns were hanging from the poles which supported the structure, and the dim candle-light produced a ghastly glare, which made it difficult to recognize faces, however near. Humble they were and in earnest, moved by the simplest impulse of their hearts, and bound together in their devotions by one common bond — the love of a common Father. The congregation were standing, singing a hymn, after which the preacher read a few passages of Scripture and gave out another hymn, —

“O for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heavenly frame,”—

which was read with deep feeling, and even with startling effect. His prayer was fervent and appropriate, moving these simple hearts, and calling from them such ejaculations as “Dis lowly heart am waitin’ for you, Lord,” and “Yes, Lord, do come now an’ visit dis poor soul,” and the like. The text was, “And bearing His cross, he went forth into a place called the place of a skull.” The sermon was prefaced by the remark, that we all had life before us, with all its burdens and sorrows; and that we had come there to be strengthened for duty. We should, therefore, open our hearts to all the best influences of the place, and then we should go forth ready for the battle like “giants refreshed with new wine.” And, if any were in any trouble or sorrow, or if there were heavy burdens resting upon the heart, if we went to Jesus and laid them at his feet, and were willing to take his light and easy yoke, they would melt away like dew before the effulgent brightness of the sun. The sermon was an appeal to his hearers to place themselves under the influence of Christ. He pictured the sufferings of the Saviour, showing how meekly, yet with what patience and strength, they were borne; but he

dwelt upon the idea that divine Justice demanded the sacrifice. "Approaching Golgotha, bearing not only the cross, but the weight of your sins and mine upon his overburdened heart, he was fresh from the humiliations of the judgment hall. There mocked, with the purple robe, scourged with the whip, his tender temples pierced with thorns, with the blood and sweat upon his brows, all along the way he suffered the derision of the people, who, with cries of 'Crucify him, crucify him!' were pressing him on to his execution. Has he robbed a widow or an orphan? Has he any guile upon his lips? Has he taken gold or silver, or are his hands dripping with blood, that he is dragged thus to a Place of a Skull? Ah, no. He is the pure, the meek, the guileless one; but it must needs be that one must die. The wrath waxed hotter and hotter, that it might not be appeased by any ransom less than this very Son of God; and so the blazing sword leaps from the scabbard of justice, and the doom is sealed. As he struggles up to the summit, he faints and falls under the weight of the cross. There, upon the hill-top, stands Justice waiting to complete the sacrifice which four thousand years ago was appointed for this hour. She waits to set her seal upon the atonement. The time is expiring, while yet

the overburdened one is staggering up the hill ; but he reaches it not yet. Is the hour, then, to pass, and the world to be forever lost ? Where, then, she asks, is He who was to offer himself a ransom ? The hour will strike, and the doom will be fixed forever. O God, what an hour ! Millions stand in dread expectancy. Hell yawns before them, and the heat of eternal fires is around them, and the appealing cry goes up to heaven that they may yet be saved. With painful feet and a weary heart he was slowly moving on to the sacrifice. He was treading the wine-press alone, but it was not of Paul, or James, or John that he was thinking there. It was of the world, of you and me in our low estate and need. As the moment approaches, Calvary is reached. He is seized and laid upon the cross. Sharp nails are driven by merciless blows through his hands and feet. The cross is lifted and plunged into its place ; and while darkness covers the face of the earth, and the veil of the temple is rent, and women fall weeping at his feet, the work is done. He has not flinched nor murmured against the inexorable decree. He simply prays his Father to forgive his murderers, while the mercy-seat is sprinkled with his blood. The debt was cancelled at last ; he cried, ' It is finished,' and our salvation was secured.

Seventy-two Roman soldiers guarded the cross, passing and repassing, wagging their heads, and saying, 'We have him now. Even his God cannot save him.' The Pharisee rubbed his hands, chuckling in derision, and devils enjoyed the triumph. But wait, ye powers of hell! Your doom is written in characters of living fire! In the dark chambers of the night, for three days, he waited and slept. On the resurrection morning, Gabriel and St. Michael speak; the bonds of the grave are broken; the sleeping Jesus rises; archangels move out in majesty and glory; and through the trackless ether, quicker than the lightning's flash, the risen Lord ascends upon his blazing chariot, and rests upon the bosom of his God."

The effect of this rude eloquence upon these poor, ignorant creatures was a most curious exhibition of human nature. The preacher then made an appeal to them to follow this long-suffering Saviour; to give up their old ways of life, their profanity, their indifference, their sins, and to become truly Christian men. They wept and clapped their hands, shouting, "Amen, amen!" "I'll ship for glory!" "Dat's so!" "Yes, Lord, send a witness!" &c. They swayed to and fro, calling upon the Lord Jesus to forgive them, to wash them clean, amid groans and cries for help.

One old man rose and said, "While de bredren an' sisters are singin' 'An' must dis body die?' let all who lub de Lord, an' would wear de golden crown, an' be landed safe on Canaan's shore in de last great an' terrible day, come up to de altar an' help us beg for mercy on dare poor souls."

Then followed a scene which baffles description. Numbers of men and women, "convinced of sin," went forward, knelt down, and amid groanings and wails of agony, prayed to be saved from the bottomless pit, and from the fire which is never quenched; while we were hoping that the new birth, if such it really was, might prove a constantly renewing influence with the life of every day.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SILENT SORROWS AT HOME.

The Village Post-office. — Soldier's Letter. — The unknown Dead
— The lonely Italian, Giovanni Quaglia. — Italian Letters.

THE news of battle, it comes swift and sure. For four long years it has flashed over the wires, bringing suspense and desolation to every hamlet and village in the land. For days there is an unnatural quiet through the household, which goes on with the silent routine, under the painful pressure of uncertainty, until at last a message or a letter tells the whole.

As I have stood in a country village post-office, watching the tragedies pictured on the faces awaiting there the opening of the mail, I have seen strong men come in and take their "soldier's letter," tear off, with a trembling hand, the envelope, and wail out, "He is dead! he is dead! How can I tell his mother?" I have seen two women enter, — one sad, and care-worn,

and old, leaning upon a younger, a daughter, perhaps. They receive the letter and pass out. A glance has told them it is a stranger's hand, while a wild fear sweeps over their hearts, which they restrain till they are quite out of sight. Then the letter is opened. "May God help thee and me, Jane!" is all she says, while they hurry on to their lowly dwelling, where they may hide their grief, where there need be no concealment of its cause, and no restraint upon its utterance. "An only son of his mother, and she a widow."

Here is another mourner, with a shadow not less dark upon her life, who must struggle on alone, — she who had hoped to be a wife, but now not less a widow. And this same story has been repeated in how many forms, in how many homes, all over the land! With the witness of such griefs as these, while striving for these alleviations of suffering in the field, there was the thought of those at home, who, through long and weary months, have waited for tidings of those who have died, hoping for some explanation of the interrupted letters, and the silence which to many, alas! is the silence of the grave. And yet, in thousands of cases, this explanation never comes; and the suspense is a living grief, a lasting sorrow. Men died every day, and were carried out to the dead-house for

burial, who left no trace of friends, hardly a name to be recorded on a head-board. Look into that part of any soldiers' burial-field which is devoted to the "unknown," and see the proportion buried there. Turn, then, to the lists of names recorded, and ask of their families if they have received the notice of their death. This office was left to any comrade who might know the friends, to any humane person who was interested in the case; but it was not provided for as a part of the regular routine of hospital duty. The constant sight of the dead carried out for burial deeply touched me, and suggested a want, which might be easily supplied, of a complete list of the patients, with the address of their nearest relative. I found that nearly all the men had close family ties. Their hearts were as tender, their sensibilities as keen, their emotions as deep as ours. They were quickly moved by old memories of home, of father or mother, of wife or children; and our appealing to those affections, aside from its moral effect, had a good sanitary influence, the men being grateful for such appeals, and responding heartily to them. In our hospital such a list was attempted, and its value was every day illustrated by the touching letters of thankfulness received from homes which were clouded indeed by bereavement, which but for

such intelligence would have remained in that darker sorrow of uncertainty until they should meet their missing ones face to face in the other world. Mothers wrote of their "undying gratitude" for the simple announcement of the fact that their sons were in a hospital; or they wrote, "By the love you bear your own mother, give me some tidings of my boy. Is he alive? Where can I see him? Is he dead? When and how?"

In Washington the Sanitary Commission had a Directory, which was as complete a record as possible of names in the Washington hospitals. Mr. Bowne, the chief of this bureau, writes thus in illustration of the value of these records: —

"Of the many scenes witnessed in the bureau, I can only mention a few without attempting a description. A mother has not heard anything of her son since the last battle; she hopes he is safe, but would like to be assured. There is no escape; she must be told that he has fallen upon the 'Federal altar;' an agony of tears bursts forth, which seems as if it would never cease. Another, less excitable, does not tire of telling 'how good a boy he was.' 'No mother ever had such a son as he,' sobs a third. A father presents himself, — a strong man, and yet young in years, — to receive the

same announcement, and sinks, with audible grief, into a chair. Another, with pale face and tremulous voice, anxious to know, yet dreading to hear, is told that his boy is in the hospital a short distance off; he grasps the hand with both of his, while tears run down his cheeks, and without uttering another word leaves the room. 'It is very hard, my friend,' was said to one mute with grief, 'but you are not alone.' 'I know it, sir,' was the prompt reply, 'but he was the *only one* I had.'

"A woman of more than ordinary intelligence and appearance, with almost breathless voice, said, 'I want to find my husband; I have not heard from him for several months. I have written to the officers of his regiment, but do not get any reply; can you tell me where he is?'

" 'Will you please to give me his name, and number of his regiment?' 'O, yes, sir.' 'You will find him at Lincoln Hospital; the city cars pass near the building, and the conductor will point it out to you.' A momentary shade of incredulity is perceptible; then turning her full, deep eyes, swollen with emotion, she gives one look, — a full reward for a month of labor, — and in an instant is in the street. . . . Thus the varied scene goes on. One inquirer leaves

the room grateful, buoyant, happy, to be followed by another equally grateful, who will 'tread softly' the remainder of his days, for the 'light of his dwelling has gone out.' As each departs, another figure is added to the list of 'inquiries and answers,' and the seemingly monotonous work of the bureau is resumed."

This Directory, however, did not come into practical operation in the field hospitals, and it was the want of it which I attempted to supply. A man with whom I had but just been talking, and whose address was upon my list, passed out of his tent to dinner. In the street of the hospital he fell dead. Nobody knew to what ward he belonged; he was "unknown," a soldier just arrived. My book was called for, and there was the whole story. The poor fellow was laid upon a stretcher, and was carried to the tent for the dead; and when I went to see him, he was cold. I wrote to his wife, enclosing a hundred dollar bill found in his pocket-book; and had it not been for this list, there would have been another "Hannah at the window," waiting, watching through long years for the loved one whom she would never see again. In this case she was suffering for want of food; her children were shoeless, and thinly clad; and the money, which would otherwise have remained unclaimed in the adjutant-

general's office, met her want, and perhaps saved her little family from cold and starvation.

Even a more striking illustration of the value of such a list was shown in a case which we had watched for many days with the tenderest interest—that of a lonely Italian soldier, who had strayed from his regiment, sick and helpless, seeking refuge in our colored wards. He could not understand a word of English; and when we saw him, besides a wasting consumption, he had the gnawing of homesickness, with which he was passing rapidly away. We had been ministering to his wants with all the care and sympathy which his case awakened; and by French, and such few Italian words as we had at command, we tried to talk with him. As we spoke of our cold climate, and contrasted it with his own mild and beautiful Italy, his eyes brightened, his face seemed radiant, and, with his arms extended heavenward, he gasped out, “*L'Italie est paradise!*” He seemed to see his own smiling Pavia and Vigevano, to feel the soft breath of the Mediterranean, and to bring up all the sunny memories of his far-off home. He sank back and smiled, and I placed my hand upon his heart to feel its throbbing. His skin was white as an infant's; and on my remarking this to him, he said, with a sad smile, “*Oui, oui,*

blanc !” and then, pointing to the group of colored soldiers gathered about his bed, he tried to say, “Yet all these are black.” After much effort we found in a neighboring hospital an Italian who could act as our interpreter. There was no time to lose, for his strength was failing fast. We were eager to learn his story, which proved to be the old tale of deception and fraud, of the cruelties of the bounty agents, and of sufferings the sequel of which would soon be death. He had been in the country but a few days, when, he knew not how, he found himself clothed in a blue uniform, and regularly enlisted in the military service of the government. A man of delicate frame, he had simply broken down from the severities and exposures of the campaign, and here he was to die. His mind reverted to his distant home, and he spoke with deep emotion of his “poor old father and mother,” and his brothers, and of what a tragedy their separation had proved ; of his dear old cathedral of Vigevano, and of his employments, which he should never enter upon again. He knew he was going to die. He felt that the sands of life were fast running out, and that in a few hours all would be changed. Yet he did not shrink from death ; he welcomed it rather, for what was life to him ? It was only privation, hardship,

loneliness, and suffering. He had no influence to procure his discharge; he could make no appeal for justice; his comrades were strangers, and spoke a strange tongue, of which he knew not a word; he had no companion to whom he could look for sympathy, or to whom he could tell his story of wrong; indeed, he could hardly make himself understood by these new friends, who were trying to comfort and cheer his last hours. But one boon was granted him—that of hearing his native language from the lips of a countryman. At first he seemed bewildered; then, realizing the whole, he was overjoyed that such a blessing should have been his before he died. His deep, spiritual eyes opened, expressing indescribable content and peace, though there was still a restlessness and anxiety, of which, for a long time, we could not guess the cause. He was sinking rapidly. A weight was upon his mind, and he had not the words or the wish to reveal his trouble. At length I asked if he had money to dispose of, assuring him that if he had, he might, with perfect confidence, intrust it to us to be disposed of as he might desire. This was his secret; and, as he gave a sigh of relief, he unstrapped his belt, which contained, as it proved, eight hundred and fifty dollars. His pulse was growing faint, and his mind seemed to

wander ; but by stimulants he was so far restored as to understand our questions regarding his family, their names and residence. He tried to write, but the pencil trembled in his hand ; and through his lips, now growing white, I could just catch the letters as he spelled them out. There was clearly written out at last his own name, "Giovanni Quaglia," and that of his brother, "Giuseppe Quaglia, St. Andrews Street, Vigevano, Department of Pavia, Province of Vigevano, Italy." The money was to be sent to him, to be divided according to his discretion. The dying man seemed now at ease, and I left him that he might rest. As we withdrew, he held my hand firmly in both of his, trying in this way to express the gratitude he could not utter. The poor fellow never spoke again, for, before the dawn, he had gone up into the light of the eternal morning. His body was removed to the tent for the reception of the dead ; and at four o'clock of the following afternoon, two stretchers, upon which were borne the body of a colored soldier who had died in the cars on the way to the hospital, and this poor, friendless Italian, were carried out to their graves. There were two mourners walking on either side — a sad funeral procession. We performed a short service for the poor unknown negro, whom perhaps nobody

was to mourn, and for this stranger from another land. Soldiers gathered about the graves, standing reverently with uncovered heads; and while the earth trembled with the tremendous firing all about us, we committed these two soldiers of a holy cause to their soldiers' graves. This was my Sunday's service.

Letters were at once despatched to Italy. Succeeding steamers brought answers, clothed in the warm, fervent language of that demonstrative people, and containing most touching evidences of gratitude for our care. Both the originals and the translations are given, to complete the illustration of the value of our "book of records" to a family in another land, as well as to show the tone of earnest feeling with which they responded to a kind office, which there was no soldier in the army too humble to have received at our hands. It will also be seen that the last letter, dated June 17, 1865, contains an acknowledgment of a remittance of 2952 francs, the proceeds of the money committed to our care.

* VIGEVANO, January 7, 1865.

MOST WORTHY SIR: I have not words to express my thanks for your kind and charitable assistance to

* For the original letters see pp. 115-118.

my poor brother Giovanni. I know that you are blest in your vast country ; but gratitude is not wanting to you also in Italy.

With respect to the execution of the last wish of my poor brother, I send you enclosed a certificate of my fraternity, and a power of attorney, in order that (after deducting the expenses for converting into funds available to us the effects left by my brother, — governing yourself, in fine, according to the dictates of your fatherly heart), you may cause a draft for the same to be sent to my address. I would beg, if possible, also, to have some article belonging to my brother, that I might be the possessor of a last memorial of him. It will also be conferring an additional favor upon me if you would be pleased to inform me of what malady my brother died, and how long he was sick. I should further be doubly grateful if the prayers of the Church shall be offered up for the deceased Giovanni.

May Heaven grant you every blessing, as also the very worthy Mr. C. F. B.

Please to accept my sincere salutations and thanks, with those of my aged father. We should both of us esteem ourselves fortunate if we could in any way be of service to you.

Believe me, your devoted servant,

GIUSEPPE QUAGLIA.

VIGEVANO, April 4, 1865.

ESTEEMED SIR: I have received your very kind letter of the 28th of February, together with your likenesses. You could not have bestowed upon me a more precious gift than the portraitures of those who watched over the last moments of my poor brother. I assure you that I shall never part with them, and that while I live they will be ever before me.

With respect to the money you have in keeping, even as you have acted as a second father to my poor brother, I beg you to continue to be so also to me. You will please, therefore, to do entirely as you think best for my interest, and I leave you fully empowered to remit the amount whenever you think fit.

It will always be to me a happy circumstance to receive tidings from you, so fatherly do I consider the interest you have manifested towards me; and I would that Heaven would vouchsafe to me the privilege of being in some little way useful to you; it would be a great consolation to me.

Accept, in the mean time, my most sincere salutations, and believe me,

Most respectfully, yours,

GIUSEPPE QUAGLIA.

VIGEVANO, June 17, 1865.

MOST ESTEEMED SIR: I have received your kind letter of the 16th of May, with a bill of exchange for 2952 francs, payable 16th July; and I will advise you immediately on receiving the amount. In the mean time I have not words sufficient to thank you for so many favors conferred upon me; but I shall have your person in perpetual remembrance, as I also beg you to keep me in your memory. And if I could by any possible event be useful to you in these parts, I should deem myself most fortunate. Whenever you should think proper to favor me with tidings of yourself, they would be most gratefully received.

Accept, meanwhile, my most cordial salutations, and believe me,

Sincerely yours,

GIUSEPPE QUAGLIA.

VIGEVANO, li 7 Gennájo, 1865.

DEGNISSIMO SIGNORE: Non ò parole sufficienti per ringraziarla della caritatevole assistenza prestata al povero mio fratello Giovanni. So che la Sa. Va. è benedetta nel suo vasto paese; ma non le manca la riconoscenza anche in Italia.

Rapporto all' esecuzione dell' ultima volontà del povero mio

fratello, le acchiudo un attestato di fraternità, ed una procura che la Sa. Va. (dedotto le spese anche per convertire in assegni valevoli fra noi il valore lasciato dal mio fratello Giovanni, regolandosi insomma col suo cuore di padre), ritiri ciò di cui se tratta; ed in seguito me lo farà avere al mio indirizzo. Lo pregherei, se fosse possibile, di avere un qualche oggetto che appartenesse al mio fratello, onde avere un' ultima sua memoria come pure mi sarà un nuovo favore se la Sa. Va. vorrà degnarsi di sapermi dire di quale malattia è morto il mio fratello, e quanto tempo stette ammalato. Le sarò doppiamente grato, se farà dire una prece al Giovanni estinto.

Il Cielo le accordi del bene, come all' ottimo signore Carlo Federico Bradford; ed accetta i miei sinceri saluti e ringraziamente, anche al nome del mio vecchio padre, che si domanderessimo fortunati se entrambi potessimo essergli utili in qualche cosa; e mi creda,

Suo devotissimo servo,

GIUSEPPE QUAGLIA.

VIGEVANO, 4 Aprile, 1865.

DEGNISSIMO SIGNORE: O ricevuto la gentilissima sua lettera delli 28 febbrajo, unitamente al suo ritratto e quello della gentile Signora Gilson. Regalo maggiore non mi poteva fare che quello d'aver l'immagine di due cuori così generosi, i quali anno assistito anche negli ultimi momenti

del povero mio fratello; e le assicuro che non li abbandonerò mai, e sin che vivrò, staranno sempre a me dinanzi.

Riguardo la somma che tiene in deposito, siccome Lei a fatto da secondo padre al mio povero fratello, quindi lo prego di essere egualmente verso di me; perciò faccia Lei come meglio crede onde fare al mio interesse, e così lo lascio in facoltà di spedirmeli quando crede opportuno.

Mi sarà poi sempre in grande favore onde qual volta avrò il piacere di ricevere delle sue notizie, mentre io la stimo come mio padre, e desidererei che il Cielo mi volesse accordare la grazia di poter essergli utile in qualche cosa, che sarebbe per me l' unica consolazione.

Aggradisca intanto i miei più sinceri saluti, e mi creda suo umilissimo servo,

GIUSEPPE QUAGLIA.

P. S. Voglia degnarsi di fargli tanti saluti alla gentile Signora Gilson.

VIGEVANO, 17 Gugno, 1865.

PREGIATISSIMO SIGNORE: O ricevuto la gentile vostra lettera delli 16 Maggio con una cambiale di fr: 2952 pagabili 16 Luglio, che subito vi renderò avvisato quando avrò incassato l' amontare. Intanto non ò parole per ringraziarvi dei tanti favori che mi avete fatto; ma avrò eterna memoria della vostra persona come pure vi prego voi pure di avermi presente: e se per caso vi occorresse d' abbisognarvi qualche

cosa da queste parti, ricordatevi di me, che potendo esservi utile in qualche cosa mi domanderei fortunato. Quando credete, favoritemi di vostre notizie che mi saranno sempre care.

Accettate intanto i miei cordiali saluti e credetemi sempre,

Vostro affmo. amico e servo,

GIUSEPPE QUAGLIA.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BULL-RING.

The Picturesque in the Hospital. — Scenes in the Wagon Train Hospital. — The Sixth Corps. — Their Bivouac. — The Bull-Ring. — Sufferings of the Prisoners. — Their Destitution. — Their Wants supplied. — Men under Sentence of Death.

THE high standard which the hospital had attained made it necessary to keep on with the work of renovation and improvement. As to one street of our camp there was nothing to desire. The tents were clean and cheerful; the beds all neat and in order; the tent poles decorated with fanciful paper, or with colored cloth; festoons of red, white, and blue; sprigs of evergreen, cedar, or holly, with the little bright berries, pinned to the tent cloth over each bed, or set upon the little tables standing at each bedside. Then the cups and plates were scoured, and the knives, and forks, and spoons were as bright as so many silver dollars fresh from the mint; the stoves were black as

polish could make them; and all was so fresh and sweet, that one would be satisfied himself to be sick there. Each nurse taxed his ingenuity and taste to invent some new thing to please the eye; and if a stray "Harper's" found its way into camp, it was soon appropriated, and the pictures pasted into a frame, which hung conspicuously before the men. All sorts of little devices like these added cheerfulness to our camp, and a home-like feeling to the wards.

The camp was in the form of a hollow square; the light-diet kitchen, the dispensary, the surgeon's quarters, the sanitary supply store, and the steward's tent, were all in the centre, and the hospital wards were all round in the three streets of the square. One of these streets had been below the mark. The nurses had been reminded of this, but had neglected their duty. They were called up, ordered to "fall in" in two ranks, which led them to fear that they were to be sent to their regiments. In a few words the law was laid down; they were marched through some of the tents on the other side of the camp, and two days were allowed before inspection. In the mean time the woods were scoured for green branches and holly sprigs, and before the appointed day the tents were

ready for the examination. Thus our whole hospital was brought up to its high standard.

Every day we were at the bedside of the dying, trying to understand their last messages to wives or mothers, trying to relieve the last pangs of those whose spirits seemed to be just fluttering between earth and heaven. One old negro in a tent next to ours had tried to tell me what he wished me to write to his family, and I had left him after administering a little wine. Within ten minutes he sent for me again, seeming brighter than when I had left him. He had been thinking of all the kindness "which that little lady and you, sir, had shown me, a poor stranger in this lonely country," and the tears dropped one by one down upon his coarse beard as he tried to express his gratitude. He told me to write to his wife that "he was happy, for he had found friends, and he felt that the good Father was very near;" and so the old man sank back upon his pillow to die.

Half a mile from our camp was a wretched group of tents, called "the hospital of the wagon train." It was indeed no hospital, but a place where some thirty sick men were lying utterly neglected, with little medical attendance, and but two nurses, with no comforts, needing everything. Their more pressing wants were

supplied. Being *civilians*, and employed only as laborers, they were not entitled to any medical care except that which they could secure by payment, and they had no claim upon the medical supplies. The men were sick and destitute, and we arranged for those who needed care the most to send daily to our kitchen for their diet, and promised that they should receive such other attentions as we could give them. They were rough, but intelligent and kindly; Maine men, hardy pioneers, who had, through exposure and by working in the water, got inflammatory rheumatism, which had caused them the most acute suffering. They were nearly all in this condition. One old, gray-headed man, lying on a rough board bunk, quiet and patient as a child, with that pale, suffering look, and those deep, sunken eyes, which mark those who have been wasting away with pain, said, when we gave him of our stores, and laid by his side one thing after another which he needed most, "We have these societies in our town for the soldiers, but I never began to realize the value of them till now. Mind, I'm none of your flatterers. I'm an old man, have had a hard lot in life; I've got five sons in the army — my all; and if I never see them again, I give them to the cause. You don't know how your coming here

kind o' cheers me up." We knew it did, for we saw the tears gathering in his eyes; and when I thought of those five sons, I could not but recall the beautiful letter of consolation then just written by Abraham Lincoln to the poor widow who had *buried* her five boys, when he spoke of the feeling of "*solemn pride*" which was her precious privilege, now that she had laid such a sacrifice upon the altar of her country. I could not but feel that the same was applicable to him also, — that "*solemn pride*."

As we returned, we went down to the bank of the river, the point of junction of the James and the Appomattox, which opened wide, and beautiful, and calm, like the Bay of Naples. The rivers, blending into one, were like a mirror. There was a lovely purple haze over the whole country, and the trees and undergrowth on the edge of the low shores on either side were dimly reflected in the unruffled water. A tow-boat, puffing white steam in great clouds, which curled behind it, added to the picture, and was the only thing to cause a ripple upon the surface; and we looked, trying to realize that this was the base of operations of two gigantic armies, all so still and peaceful in the foreground, and all so fiercely energetic in the rear.

The Sixth Corps, after its splendid service under Sheridan in the Valley of the Shenandoah, was transferred back to the Army of the Potomac early in December, 1864. The First Division reached our camp about noon, and bivouacked. Our hospital dinner had been served, and we were uncertain what disposition to make of the remaining pans of turkey, when we thought of these men who had halted for an hour's rest. Their haversacks were empty; but fires were soon blazing, coffee was soon boiling, and each group was intent on the preparation of their scanty meal. It was a picture, but I cannot paint it. The corps was covered with the dust and heat of a great campaign. They had been marching and fighting with but little intermission for three months. They were rough and rusty; their uniforms were torn, threadbare, and spattered with mud; and the men were rude, grim, and much in earnest. They had an air of the unconquerable about them, a steady self-reliance, and perfect enthusiasm for their leader and their work, which was verified afterwards in their characteristic and successful assault upon the enemy's works. They gathered about their fires, hungry, thirsty, grimy; their knapsacks were thrown off, their arms were stacked, and their burdens lightened for an

hour. Men were bringing wood and water, while the coffee was boiling upon the coals, waiting for the hard tack, which with it was to be their only meal. The fellows lined the road, asleep, on the rampage, on the lounge, and nibbling their scanty rations. We started out with the remnant of our hospital dinner. Turkey did not often grace the camp, and the boys needed no other invitation than our approach. We were instantly surrounded, and for a moment were ready to think that these men were wolves in human shape. The circle grew larger and larger. New heads and faces, peering one above another, were added to the crowd with every moment, while before me were a hundred cups blackened by many a long campaign, with a hundred voices, each demanding his share of what we had. Antony was standing near me within the circle, holding high above his head this other pan of turkey. A hundred hands were raised, hands of every shape and shade, all extended to scramble for a bone, each finger on the stretch, expressive of eagerness and want. In an instant the pan was emptied, each soldier, with a hand full of turkey soup, or of bare turkey bones, working his way out of the inner circle, with a face of such jolly satisfaction, that we were repaid for all our trouble in their behalf.

Roughs and desperadoes are found in all armies. Under a system of bounties the dregs of Europe were landed on our shores, and soon found their way into the ranks. The business of recruiting was monopolized by men whose profession was gambling or thieving, or who were adepts in the art of murder; and the result was desertion and bounty-jumping, and a vast accumulation of greater or lesser crimes, which demanded sharp and instant retribution. As a place of confinement at City Point the Prisoners' Barracks were established, known as the Bull-Ring of the army.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the painful impressions which the first view of this den left upon my mind. Indeed, I have no colors dark enough to supply all the shading to that terrible picture; nor have I the words in which to describe it, or the life within it, as presented to me on my brief visit of inspection.

The pen was composed of three large barracks of one story, which opened each into separate enclosures or yards, surrounded by high wooden fences, strictly guarded by sentries day and night, while this was all enclosed in a single railing, between which and the high fence a patrol guard was kept constantly in motion. The inner sentry stood guard upon a raised platform built out from the fence, which gave him a

view of the three pens and of every prisoner in them. At the entrance was a horizontal bar of wood, supported by two upright posts, from which were suspended short ropes used for tying up men by the hands or thumbs as a punishment. As I entered the yard, four men were standing, some on tiptoe, tied with their hands above their heads, without overcoats, shivering in a sharp December wind, their hands black with the cold. To illustrate the class of men thus punished: one of these four, a man of fierce and desperate spirit, who had threatened the lives of some of his comrades, and upon whom already rested a charge of murder, refused to give his name and regiment to the court martial convened to try him. This blocked the trial, as no witnesses could be summoned; and, as he was obstinate in his reticence, he was ordered to be tied up every day until he would tell the organization to which he belonged. For six days he endured this torture, which at any moment he could have relieved; and, as I afterwards learned, when he could bear it no longer, and told his name and regiment, his spirit was so utterly crushed and broken that he became as quiet, inoffensive, and obedient as a child. The court martial dealt, probably, with every variety of charge, from petty thefts and disrespect to officers, up to desertions

to the enemy, and captures of these same deserters with arms in their hands. But, innocent or guilty, held for the highest crimes known to military law, or for the common delinquencies or felonies of a soldier, all were confined alike and together, awaiting trial. At this time there were about four hundred men imprisoned. Their condition was horrible. They were destitute of clothing; and, up to January, without stoves, their sufferings were as needless as they were intolerable. It was my fortune to obtain admission, with another member of the Sanitary Commission, to estimate their wants, to look into their condition, and to suggest such remedies, or provide such alleviations, as we might have it in our power to offer — a privilege not before extended to a civilian. With a large quantity of woollen shirts and drawers, stockings and towels, paper and envelopes, we entered the enclosure. It was a pen of filth and vermin. Previous to this visit, tickets for clothing had been issued to those who were most in need. We stood upon a raised platform, looking down upon the yard. The officer in charge ordered the men out of the barracks, and they formed in line. I shall never lose the impression of those faces as they were turned up, each eager for something, where they all needed so much. The men came

shuffling out of the building, with that listless air which showed how indifferent they were to their fate : couples chained together ; men half naked came alone ; clad in every variety of garments, — Federal uniforms and Confederate, — the blue, and the yellowish-gray, all in rags ; some with a meal-sack over their shoulders, some with a gunny-bag for a jacket, others with their cotton drawers, and with feet tied up in bagging, to serve as shoes and stockings ; without hats, with uncombed hair, ragged, filthy, all alive with vermin. Here were hardened criminals, — the outlaws of society, — reckless and defiant, many of them under sentence of death, yet unconcerned about their fate, and careless whether the execution were ordered for to-morrow, or were indefinitely postponed. There were sixty or seventy others, who knew that after trial their crimes would be expiated on the scaffold, or that they would be “shot to death by musketry,” yet accepted their lot with a profane bravado which made one shudder.

The line was formed, and our distribution began. One by one they came forward. To the first, “Unbutton that blouse, and let us see what you require.” It was stripped open, and he was naked to the waist. “A shirt for you.” The next man, with gunny-cloth

tied over his feet, sore and bleeding with the cold, "A pair of stockings." The next, comparatively comfortable, "Only a towel." The next, with only a thin pair of drawers, and no pantaloons, "A pair of drawers." And so, one by one, the men pressed forward, — some with meal-sacks for a blanket, others without even this protection, breaking the line in their eagerness to receive something to keep them warm ; a shivering, suffering crowd, pinched by the frosty morning air ; their hands, and feet, and bodies blue with cold. They moved about the yard, if for nothing more than to keep up a brisk circulation ; men of all ages, from the gray-haired to the youngest lads, and some so utterly broken in spirit that they had evidently resigned themselves to whatever might be in store for them. One man, who previously had only the thinnest clothing, without shirt or drawers, sat at night in his bunk with his hands folded up under his jacket, which he tightened about him, crying by the hour together. There was one lad, of only twelve years, in this pen — a bright little fellow, quick in his movements, the only really cheerful one in all that crowd of men. As I asked the lieutenant why a boy was placed with such desperadoes, the lad looked up and said, with the most perfect nonchalance, "I relieved my captain of some

of his greenbacks ; he had too many, and I had none ; he didn't know how to use them, and I thought I would spend them for him." The boy was demoralized ; but when I remonstrated with the officer against confining such a lad with such associates, he said, what I had already been convinced was true, that he was as bad as any of the men, and could not be worse. I replied that he might be made better, and ought to be removed. He pointed to headquarters, and told me to go there, if there was wrong to be redressed.

The court martial tried, on an average, four cases a day. Five were sent away for execution the day I was there. A negro was sentenced, for an attempted crime, to the ball and chain. The chains were *riveted* round his ankles, two heavy iron balls being attached ; and when he walked, he either carried them in his hands or dragged them after him, while the clanking of the chain was heard wherever he moved.

After the distribution of the clothing we went through the barracks ; and I could readily believe the officer, who had been a prisoner at Richmond, when he said that he would rather be confined in the Libby Prison for six months than in the Bull-Ring for one. They were about thirty feet in width by one hundred and fifty feet long, built of rough boards, one

story high. Along the whole length of the barracks, on each side, were bunks, which held three or four men each, the floor serving for one, and three being made above it. In the centre of the building was another range of them, which extended from end to end; and the scene here beggared all description. The bunks were not filled, for many were in the yard; but each one had its occupants, and their condition was loathsome in the extreme. They were lying upon the boards, with no straw or blanket; and although there were no prison bars or dungeon walls, yet it was dark and noisome. Lying all about us were men under sentence of death, awaiting their call to the gibbet. In one bunk was a man all curled up with chills, wrapped in an empty sack for oats, without straw or other covering. There was yet a spark of kindness left, as I could see by his subdued "Thank you," which was, in him, more than an utterance of words. In one bunk were two men chained together, lying in a state of utter wretchedness and despair. Their condition was horrible, and they were awaiting their doom. I shall never forget the expression of their faces as they uncovered them, nor the intense yearning for companionship which was expressed in their eyes, half obscured by their long matted hair, as they looked

up in response to something I said to them. They were in the darkest corner, on the floor, so soon to be executed, yet with nobody to speak one gentle word, or to offer to them any kindly sympathy in their last hour.

But this state of things had been worse. Before these barracks were built, the men were in little shelter tents in the yard, and at night slept upon the ground with no blankets or other covering to protect them. In rainy weather they were exposed, with no overcoats, clad just as I have described them above. Complaints were made, and barracks were built; and only the day before my visit had stoves been put into them. The barracks were built from a fund which accumulated, like a hospital fund, from the savings of rations issued by the government. A full ration was more than the necessities of a man required; and where so many were together, a saving was made and a fund accumulated, which was appropriated for the benefit of the men. The only redeeming feature of the whole was the food and the arrangements for cooking it. This was done in a separate building in the enclosure. A large circular brick furnace was built, about four feet high, containing six large caldrons, which were set with grates and flues, ingeniously arranged for the boiling of soup, meat, and coffee. I looked this

cooking department through during the preparation of dinner, and all was clean and in order.

After our visit, stringent orders for cleanliness were issued ; and, as the winter passed, their condition did not grow worse ; and as spring opened, it improved day by day.

CHAPTER IX.

CHARACTERS IN THE HOSPITAL.

Arrival of the Wounded. — Last Words. — The New Hampshire Soldier. — The Colored Drummer-Boy. — Tender Spots. — The Vermont Soldier. — Influence of Suffering. — Hospital Bummers. — Track, the Maine Artillerist. — A German Soldier of the Third Generation. — Cheerfulness in the Hospital. — The Death of Hartman. — Comfort-Bags. — Washing for the Hospitals. — Contraband Camp.

THE absorbing interest of this hospital life increased every day: with new cases, new characters, new countenances, new sufferings, new stories of sorrow, every hour was full. The wounded cavalry men were brought in from the recent movements on our left. The train stopped in the rear of our tent. It was dark and raining. With our lanterns we went out to assist their removal on stretchers, — some, alas! who needed no sympathy now, who were past all healing! One poor lad, to be so tenderly cared for, with both arms just amputated, was yet gentle and patient

in this loss, and confident that his friends would rally to his aid. Another, with a bandage over both eyes, had had one of them destroyed by a bayonet thrust in a charge; and such cases of individual suffering were now to demand all our care. A bunch of grapes we gave to one, a cup of water to another, a glass of wine to another, — reaching, in this simple way, wants which more ambitious offerings would not supply; yet all were received with speechless gratitude, and reacted upon one's own heart in ways too subtle to be defined. The story of such experiences can never be told. In addition to the spoken word, there was the tone, the look, the fluttering life, the stillness of the ward, and the presence of death. If I could have written it as I went along, — if I could have given pictures daguerre-typed from the instant impressions and experiences of every hour, apart from its grouping, and coloring, and shading, — it would have been a revelation of individual character, a history of individual endurance, an outline of those finer sensibilities and emotions which enrich our human nature, and give a new sense of its dignity, beauty, and nobility. There were many things to touch the heart as we went from ward to ward, too trifling indeed to jot down in a diary, or to write in a letter, yet not too unimportant to recall

after they were gone, as a part of the tragedy of our daily lives.

One poor fellow, who seemed to be as well as usual, sufficiently strong to move about his tent, went to lie down, and within two hours breathed his last. I happened to be with him, administering stimulants, chafing his hands and temples; but the angel was hovering over him, and the spirit took its flight. As I stepped into another tent, another of the dead was borne off to his burial on a stretcher. And so it went on from day to day, with nobody to drop a tear, with nobody to think of it a moment after the man was laid in his grave.

Often the dying were conscious to the last; some of them realizing their condition, and waiting for the summons, with a faith as simple as a child's. One man said to me, "Tell my mother that I am dying; tell her that I have nothing to fear; tell her I am sure of an eternal home, for I know that my Saviour has gone to prepare it." Another man said to me, "Nothing can befall me, for Jesus Christ does and will sustain me." And so they passed on from day to day, — some with the tenderest hearts and with a most living faith, others benumbed and unconscious by disease, or wild with the delirium of fever.

In one of our wards we had a little fellow, possibly reaching the minimum stature of a soldier, but only fourteen years of age, a New Hampshire lad, rugged, intelligent, and of most winning countenance. I asked him why he entered the service. He wanted to save his country. He was sick from exposure, he would admit ; but still he liked the service, was satisfied with his rations, and “wanted to see the thing through.” A brave boy, away from the influences of home, roughing it in the army with the rest, sleeping on the ground, rolled in his blanket only, the coldest nights, yet with no gnawing homesickness at his heart, only cheerfulness, hopefulness, and good courage. He had the true New England grit.

Another lad, — a sick, helpless, and friendless colored boy, — not quite fourteen, whose only home had been a cold and cheerless camp, died, after many weeks of wasting fever. He was a poor little waif in a great army ; he had no memories of a pleasant childhood, no links bound him to any human creature but the rough soldiers who surrounded him, or to us his friends, who were touched by the gentleness and submissive patience with which he bore his pains. He had been wasting away for weeks, growing thinner and paler every day ; at times sitting curled up at the

stove in the tent, always quiet and thoughtful. He was one of the most gentle, lovable little fellows I ever met. Although he suffered much, he never complained. He seemed to feel that he could not live, and to look death in the face quietly and firmly all the time. I am not sure that he fully realized it all ; but in everything I said to him, he was so gently acquiescent that it really seemed as if he was willing and ready to die, if it so pleased the all-loving Father above. He was a drummer boy ; and as he said to me with much pathos once, " I have not a friend in the world," " Ah," said I, " Henry, we are your friends, and we will do for you all we can to make you well, and to make you happy." He knew and felt this ; and every day I used to go into his tent and sit down beside him, and try to make him realize that, although the world about him might seem very cold and hard, yet there was One who never forgot orphans and little friendless children (for he was so small and thin that I could easily have held him in my arms) ; and I endeavored to cheer his loneliness by telling him of all the pleasant people that I knew. Then he soon became too weak to rise, and so, day after day, kept his bed, patiently enduring, grateful for every effort to tempt his appetite, and for every attention that we could pay him. I

watched him day by day, and saw that the lamp was only flickering, and that very soon we should have to lay him away in the grave; and so the little fellow died as calmly and quietly as he had lived, leaving no home to be darkened by bereavement, but going up to a bright home, where we trust that he has found his friends among the angels.

It is surprising to see what tender spots there are in the hearts of some of our roughest men. I went with Miss Gilson into one of the wards, where she was asked to sing. Joining in some simple hymn, which called forth a response from a few voices in different parts of the tent, and finding how eager the men were for more, she sang a plaintive little song, "Just before the battle, mother," then the most popular song in the army, and reproduced in a hundred different ways by the soldiers or by the bands. There was perfect stillness in the ward, and the melody melted into that exquisite air, "I'm lonely since my mother died." Nearly every man had raised himself on his elbow to catch these notes. Some were wiping their eyes, and others, too weak to move, were hiding their emotion, which still was betrayed by the quivering lip, and the single tear as it fell, but was not wiped away. One fine fellow, a Vermont boy, very sick, could hardly

• speak, when she went up and laid her hand upon his head, and brushed back his fine, soft, black hair. He was a man of delicate mould; and she soon found, in talking with him, that although a private in the army, he magnified his position, while it also reflected back its dignity upon him. Homesickness had done its work. He had been in the hospital six months, after the severe exposures of the earlier part of the campaign. He said to me, "Do you know how many men die of homesickness in the army? O," said he, "I feel it so much *here*," pressing his fingers over his heart, "and I think it will wear me out."

As we moved about from tent to tent, or from bed to bed, it is not true that every man in the hospital presented such strong claims upon our sympathies. These were only individual cases; and as these are generally mentioned in hospital experiences, people get the impression that all hospital life is full of heroism, of thrilling personal narrative, or of that which moves or melts the heart to tenderest pity. Now, any true picture of hospital life must tell the whole story. I know that suffering subdues and softens any nature, however rough; and that there is an influence all the time in the hospital to bring out what is purest and noblest in the heart; still, the men who lie there are

only average men ; and while there may be many choice spirits among them, and many who show every day a noble fidelity to their position, yet a large proportion are those who have had no previous advantages of training ; who entered into the service from various motives ; who are quite unused to the finer susceptibilities and amenities of life, — all classes of men, even to those who are unworthy of the uniform they wear. We met all sorts of characters ; some from whom I shrank with instinctive aversion ; others, whom no kindness seemed to touch ; and others still, who would play upon your innocence or your sympathies, practising those tricks of the army which were unworthy of any man. And here were such of every grade : the morose and the affable ; the kindly tempered and the churlish ; the outlaw and the gentleman ; the tenderly educated boy, with a mother at home who never forgets him in her prayers ; the man of high and noble motive, who remembers his wife and little children as the one sacred bond to keep him true ; and the outcast of society, whom nobody would weep for, — of whom the world says, perhaps too harshly, that he is fit only for the front of the line of battle, and whom society is glad to be rid of when he dies.

Yet these men were all soldiers in a common cause.

They fought for our national honor, they fell bleeding in its defence, and all alike were entitled to all the healing ministries of our service — to the balm which we could pour into their aching wounds. There were loathsome diseases which called for personal service at the bedside, which yielded to him who rendered it only heartache and depression; there were kindnesses and attentions which all had a right to claim, yet which did not always meet with responses of gratitude; while without the most careful self-discipline, one found himself serving one patient at the expense of another, — neglecting the outcast for the sake of the gentleman. We did have our pets in the hospital, and we could not help it. How different was it to go into one tent and see a poor boy raised in bed, dying of a rapid consumption, yet so cheerful, subdued, and quiet in his sufferings, thankful for every word of sympathy, or for any attention to his comfort, and then pass on to another tent of men, convalescent, perhaps, who found pleasure only in the vilest literature (for which we always substituted decent books), men whose tastes were low, who had no habits of personal cleanliness, and had to be educated up to it every day. Thus we had every variety of character in our work. It was not all poetry, nor was it pretty

sentiment to cry over. It was hard, exhausting work, sometimes discouraging, and always sad. There were few gleams of sunshine, there were many clouds; but whether the burden were easy or light, we had to carry it cheerfully and hopefully unto the end.

In the transfer of colored troops from the Army of the Potomac to the Army of the James, a regiment passed through our hospital and camped in the edge of the woods directly in our rear. The surgeon reported his sick. The Medical Director ordered them into our vacant beds, and I was sent to see their condition and to get them in. Fifty-five men were lying out without shelter from the dampness of the evening, with no more care than a surgeon with no medical supplies could give, and altogether the men were in a sad and suffering condition. They were bolstered up against the trees; fires had been built before them, and they were needing everything. Ambulances were provided, and before midnight they were in comfortable beds. This was no sooner done than the steam whistle spoke the arrival of another train to be cared for — cases of black, malignant typhoid; many helpless on stretchers, some shivering with chills, others on fire with fever — a picture, by the dim candle-light, of misery indeed. When the work is over we seek

our rest, and morning finds those who had died during the evening, in the dead tent, with their names pinned upon their blankets, wrapped ready for their humble burial.

“Trask is dead,” said Parrish to me one afternoon on my return from the front. A strong bond of sympathy had existed between us, and for weeks I had watched his painful decline with an interest which I sometimes thought only one brother could feel for another in such an experience ; and now in my absence he had died. I went to the dead tent alone, and gently removed the blanket which was his only shroud. He lay, calm and placid, and free from pain, next to a comrade who had died the same hour, a helpless cripple, both occupying beds side by side. If ever sickness illustrated the triumph of spiritual power over physical weakness and pain, his, in that humble hospital bed, had made it clear. When it became evident that an operation was necessary to save life, in the nervous quivering of the flesh, he groaned. It was but once, and it was the only expression of pain I heard him utter while he was under our care. I had some choice port wine, which we gave him three times a day, and for a time he seemed to be gaining slowly ; but it was only in seeming, for he was really growing weaker and

weaker every day. One morning I went in to see him, and as I put my hand upon his forehead he spoke to me about his wife and the four little children whom he should never see again. He went into the service a private soldier, with the simple purpose of doing his part, which he had done, as I afterwards learned, with unspotted honor. He loved his family, and he loved his country; and if we are to judge of the character of his service from the spiritual beauty of his last days, — from his constancy, and patience, and strong, courageous cheerfulness, — it must have been indeed a service of which the purest patriot might well be proud. But he was to die, and he knew it; and as I bade him good by, thinking to see him again, with the pressure of his hand there was the moistened eye, which I cannot but feel was his expression of the closeness of the tie which bound us two together in this last companionship of his life. The letters from his wife, afterwards received, tried to express her gratitude for our care. She knew he could not live, and in her sorrow, which will darken her whole life, she could only write, “It is so hard, it is so hard to bear!”

In one of our wards was a young German, a noble fellow, a soldier of the third generation, his grandfather

having been killed at the battle of Leipsic, under Napoleon, and his father in the revolution in Germany in 1848. The young man enlisted early in the war, and when his time expired he went in again. He was devoted to the cause, and determined to see the struggle through. Within him were smouldering those old fires of liberty which had allured him to this country, and finally into the strife; and he was there fighting for a cause which he believed to be his cause, as it was the cause of every oppressed people on the earth. He had been in every battle of the Army of the Potomac, which, to a man who had not flinched, was indeed a proud record. With his mother he had struggled on for six years through poverty and neglect until he made a comfortable home for her, and then he entered the army. His face told of privation and suffering. There were deeper lines in his forehead than one often sees in men of twenty-two, and his whole face showed a manhood well controlled, a pure and resolute purpose, with a heart as gentle and tender as a woman's. I could see this when he spoke of his mother, and of that one furlough two years before, and of the blessing which that brief visit was to him. Such a cheerful face is always sunlight in the ward, where, upon hospital beds, through days and weeks of pain, there

are so few alleviations. And as to cheerfulness, I am reminded of an old man who was brought in weeks before, so reduced that we thought it impossible that he should live. I call him old, while yet he was only forty-four; but I can only think of him as a man of sixty. Although so broken and prostrated, a mere skeleton in frame, he was the most thoroughly cheerful man we had. Whatever his condition, he would say, "I think I am on the gain." He never looked on the dark side; and when I have wondered at his cheerfulness, he would say, "We sick men have our duties too. You are patient and kind to us; we should repay you, in the only way we can, by being cheerful." And this is heroism. It is not the heroism of the battle-field, for that is thought to be a grander thing than any such endurance; but it is the harder heroism of the hospital, which, if never recorded in our literature, has its bright pages in the book of eternal remembrance.

Mr. Ware says, in his little tract, that cheerfulness is not merely the grace of a full heart, — it is often the charm of a sad one; and I am sure that this old man had enough to make him sad. As I saw him wasting away day by day, and felt that the chillness of death was creeping over him, and as at last I was called to

feel his pulse as it ceased to beat, I thought of that little verse, so applicable here. —

“Cast as a broken vessel by,
Thy will I can no longer do;
Yet while a daily death I die,
Thy power I may in weakness show;
My patience may thy glory raise,
My speechless woe proclaim thy praise.”

The last hours of the old year were consecrated, as so many preceding days had been, by death. One man, also prematurely old, who had been drafted, and accepted as a good recruit but four months ago, leaving his little family of three children and their mother, was now to fill a soldier's grave. Disease had made fearful inroads upon his system; and his face, so thin, and pinched, and care-worn, always bore a concentrated expression of pain. Still, he ever spoke hopefully about his home, and about “the three smart little boys as you'd ever wish to put your eyes on.” He asked me to write to “Mary,” that she must not let his sickness, or even his death, if he were to die, trouble her too much. “Although it is very hard to be so far away from her, yet I try to be happy, and I keep saying over to myself all the hymns I ever knew.” And as he fell back upon this exquisite

resource of his memory, drawing upon the wealth of his religious stores for the only comfort and peace which could come to him in his last hours. Towards evening the nurse called me, and said Hartman was dying. I took my flask of brandy, a little bay rum, and a clean linen handkerchief, and went into his tent. His hands were clasped, his eyes were set, and his face bore such an expression of suffering as made it the most piteous sight that one could look upon. Finding him conscious, but unable, although trying, to speak, by stimulants and chafing he was so much restored as to speak feebly what he wished to say. He preferred to talk in German; so, through a nurse who was in the ward, he gave me his last messages to those at home, and then sank rapidly, the heart having entirely ceased within a few moments, although it was impossible to tell the instant when he died. As the sun went down in a flood of splendor on New Year's Eve, we laid him away; and as the morning of Sunday broke still and peaceful on our camp, I could not but think of the weeping women at the sepulchre, who found the stone rolled away, and in their risen Lord that death was swallowed up in victory.

Every home influence which can be brought to bear upon a soldier's life in camp or hospital is needed to

counteract the immoralities, the coarseness, and the manifold temptations with which they are surrounded. They derive pleasure from even a trifling remembrance, and the simplest gift is not without its influence. There was a distribution of "comfort bags," containing all the little conveniences which a soldier on the march or in the hospital is always glad to receive — needles, thread, pins, buttons, tape, and yarn, together with little papers of pepper, ginger, cloves, even tea, and sugar, and tobacco ; and in all my hospital experiences I have never seen anything which has given such real pleasure to the men. Those who were able to move gathered round the stores in their wards, the cripples of all kinds crept up and sat upon the adjoining beds, each waiting for his gift. As it was handed to him, he went to the bottom of it with the pleased curiosity of a little child searching the stocking for the gifts of Santa Claus on Christmas morning.

"Look at that needle-book !"

"See my towel — just what I wanted !"

"Jolly ! here's a comb : haven't had one since the Weldon Railroad !"

And one man, who had a felon on his finger, found a little roll of soft linen with a box of salve — the very thing he needed most. He retired to his bed in the

corner with as much quiet satisfaction as I ever saw pictured on any face. One little flaxen-haired lad, not yet sixteen, the skin of whose forehead was as white and transparent as an infant's, yet very sick with typhoid fever, said to me, as he looked up holding feebly out his thread, and pins, and buttons, "This will be my only Christmas present,—it is so nice to be remembered."

The letters from the children who sent these things were also a blessing to the men. One of these particularly attracted them. After its contents had been rehearsed to a little group, a hail was heard from a distant corner: "I say, let's have it up here now." A fine-looking man, propped up in bed, having lost his arm, was chosen reader; and as he spoke in a full, clear voice, every eye was upon him, while men were turning on their cots to catch every word. When it was finished, cries of, "Good! good!" "That's the sort!" &c., resounded through the ward. The value of such gifts in their influence cannot be over-estimated in rough army life, where each man has to look out for himself, and where he has everything to drive away the more softening influences of his home.

I have seen enough to make me believe in the truth

of that simile I have heard, that many a soldier is like a September chestnut, — the outside is hard, and sharp, and shut up ; but the inside is soft, and sweet, and good. Now, the thing is to get at the inside ; and I claim that if the shell was once cracked, and one fairly reached the tender spot, recalling memories of home, of wife, or mother, or little children, they would forget their brutal games and coarse associates, and show the tenderness and the gentleness which were in their hearts, but which their rough exterior so entirely concealed.

The washing for the hospitals was done by the contrabands, the government, for such service, providing them with shelter and rations. Their little settlements were therefore connected with each hospital at City Point. They flocked into our lines from the old plantations, — whole families, of three generations, — and cast their lot with us. It was often a hard lot. At first their encampment was composed of mere hospital flies, hardly yielding shelter from the rain. Their cooking was done upon embers on the ground, the smoke filling their tents, which afforded no outlet. The discomfort of this may readily be conceived. Winter came on with no provision for them, and caused the sharpest suffering. They were destitute of clothing and money,

and were dying from exposure and neglect. I asked one of them one day why he left his home. He looked up at me with a simple wonder, saying, "O, 'case I couldn't stay dar no longer."

"Why not?"

"'Case I wouldn't eat de worm nor take de lash. In massa's 'backer-field de programme is, for ebery one dat miss a worm in pickin' from de leaf, why you hab to eat dat worm or take de lash; I took de lash rather dan eat de worm. So dey stretch me out on all fours, and take de long brack whip, and cut de flesh. Den dey cut de ground wid de bloody lash, and get it full ob dirt, and draw de blood again; and dat's de trubble. I lub de missus and de chil'ren; but de Lord open de door, and dat was 'nuff fur me."

In this rude camp, with all the privations of this primitive style of living, there was no complaint. With a simple submission to their lot, they accepted it without a murmur. The attention of Miss Gilson had been called to their condition, and soon comfortable huts were built, clothing was sent from the North, and their prospects brightened. These huts were built in streets, were well trenched, and, if not always tight and warm, were far more comfortable than open air exposure. Some of them were extremely neat and

pleasant, and the women took pride in their humble homes. The work these women performed was of great value to the hospitals. With a superintendent to direct them, they labored faithfully. Eager to learn, thankful for a word of encouragement, they became accustomed to their new position, and were satisfied and happy.

The influence of Miss Gilson was quickly noticeable in the camp. Her word was law ; and as she moved among them, illustrating and enforcing the plain duties of life, its effect was seen in greater faithfulness to their work, in kindness to each other, in neatness, and gentleness with the children. She made them feel that their religion was not for prayer meetings and Sundays alone, but was for the wash-tub, for duty among the sick, for bearing their burdens patiently — a religion for work-day life, for all places and all times. They were made to feel that they had hearts and minds, as well as bones and muscles ; and that while they were compelled to work for their daily bread, they must also steadily improve their condition, and be worthy of their freedom, by living true, devout, faithful, and loving lives.

CHAPTER X.

ACTIVE OPERATIONS.

THE SURRENDER OF GENERAL LEE.

Grant's Closing Campaign. — Recapitulation of Movements. — Petersburg. — Southside Railroad. — Ewell's Corps captured. — Confederate Generals Ewell, Kershaw, and Custis Lee. — Their Bivouac. — Woodbridge, the Georgia Soldier.

THE long winter of 1864-5 was passing into spring. Through the apparent inactivity of many months, General Grant's plans were silently culminating to the point of a general movement of the army. Sheridan's cavalry had just finished the last raid in the valley and on the James River Canal, and having been partly remounted at White House, was now ready for the grand movement to the left.

President Lincoln, the Lieutenant-General, Meade, Sherman, and Admiral Porter were in council at the modest headquarters of the armies at City Point.

The strength of General Grant's combined forces

was estimated at 140,000 effective men, while that of Lee was supposed to be not less than 70,000. It is probably near enough to the truth to say that this estimate was the groundwork upon which the campaign was based. The conception, execution, and result of the operations which followed will probably be considered to be by far the most remarkable and brilliant feature of the war. With the evidence made public up to this writing, there is enough to show that the campaign was carefully planned, and as energetically carried out. One writer says, "The battles of April 1st and 2d, south of Petersburg, were necessary to the solution of the strategic problem. The object was to gain a position on the right flank of Lee, in order to force him not only to evacuate Petersburg, but to compel him to evacuate it in such a way that he would have to retreat by roads on the north side of the Appomattox River. By the success of these battles, Lee was forced north of the river, and Grant gained a route to Burksville Junction, the point to which Lee intended to retreat, running parallel to that of the rebels, separated from them, a great part of the distance, by a river much shorter and without any natural obstructions such as lay in Lee's way. Lee had to retreat by the longer route, which was practically made

still longer by the necessity of recrossing the Appomattox. The consequence was, that Grant not only reached Burksville Junction by the time Lee reached Amelia Court House, and interposed himself as an impassable barrier to the junction of Johnson and Lee, but also continually presented a force between Lee and Lynchburg. By keeping this force 'thus heading Lee off,' while at the same time he continually attacked him in flank and rear, Grant forced him, on the seventh day, to surrender his whole force. From the moment of occupying Burksville, Grant held Lee in a position from which, if defeated in battle, he had no line of retreat. He was forced to make a stand in a position in which, had he given battle, he would have been forced to an unconditional surrender or equally disastrous dispersion."

The significance, therefore, of the following letter, which Grant addressed to Lee, will be at once appreciated: "The result of the last week must convince you of the hopelessness of further resistance on the part of the Army of Northern Virginia in this struggle. I feel that it is so, and regard it as my duty to shift from myself the responsibility of any further effusion of blood, by asking of you the surrender of

that portion of the Confederate States Army known as the Army of Northern Virginia."

It is well known that the army, by a well-directed assault upon the rebel position in front of Petersburg, carried their works on Sunday morning, April 1, and entered that city in triumph on that day. The abandonment of Richmond followed immediately, as well as the evacuation of all its defences; and the rebel army was rapidly moved in a southerly direction, as before described. Through Dinwiddie, Nottaway, and Appomattox Counties there were frequent engagements, the enemy retiring in every instance, and leaving their dead and wounded in our hands. These were scattered over sixty miles of territory, either left upon the fields or hurriedly moved to whatever place of shelter presented itself, so that along that bloody track of war every wayside church, farm-house, and barn became a hospital. The country was electrified by the news; and so elated were men's hearts with the grandeur of the victory, that its poor, maimed, suffering victims were for the moment passed by. Few at home realized the suffering; yet I think it had rarely been equalled in intensity during the war, though of course it had been in amount. The medical wagons were with the trains, which could not keep

pace with the movements of the army, and in consequence there was great destitution of supplies.

Dr. Dalton, then the Medical Director of the Ninth Corps, was ordered to establish a hospital at Burksville, and to gather in the wounded preparatory to their being sent to City Point as soon as railroad communication could be opened. He reached the Junction with no supplies, being unable at the moment to command them; but he took possession of every house and shed, sent out his wagons foraging through the country, and in a few hours had potatoes, flour, eggs, poultry, pigs, &c., in abundance. He started a bakery, and had everything as nearly ready as the state of things would admit by the time the wounded were brought in.

The surgeons were with their regiments forty miles away, and but few could be reached in the exigency. A corps was therefore organized at City Point, with orders to proceed to the front; and joining this I started in one of the first trains which entered the city of Petersburg after the evacuation. We passed directly through the abandoned camps and works of the enemy, saw their rifle-pits and fortifications, their bomb-proofs, abatis, sunken roads, and excavations, — all showing a high order of engineering skill, and

a perseverance which had proved well nigh unconquerable.

The lower part of Petersburg was a desolation. At my feet were the debris of the evacuating army: a thousand stands of arms scattered and destroyed, — gun-locks, gun-barrels, and bayonets; the rolling stock of their railroads hopelessly ruined, — cars, wheels, bolts, and rails warped and twisted by the fire. The town was apparently but little injured by the siege, although it has been stated that eight hundred houses were more or less scarred by the iron rain. A few buildings were entirely destroyed; roofs were shattered; gutters, blinds, and windows torn from their places, or bore terrible marks of the conflict. The people looked pinched and hungry. They had a pale, care-worn look, an expression of suffering and of premature age, which was enough to show that the war had been to them no pastime.

Moving slowly out over the Southside Road with a heavy train of supplies, we passed Sunderland's, Farmville, and Ford's Station, — the scenes of recent conflict, — and reached Wilson's at midnight, where we camped. While resting here a column of prisoners reached the station, and went into bivouac in the open fields adjoining. They numbered 8500 men and 800

officers, the corps of General Ewell, captured by Sheridan's cavalry and the Fifth Corps. Their sick and wounded were in this column, which had been marched twenty-five miles that day over horrible roads. A strong patrol guard was placed around their bivouac, and, by favor of the officer in charge, I entered their lines.

Generals Ewell, Kershaw, and Custis Lee, Tucker and Semmes (of the rebel navy), with other division and brigade commanders and their respective staffs, were in a group apart. Finding that strangers were welcome, I sat by their fire talking of their campaign, of the prospects of General Lee's escape, and of the general crisis of the war, which all frankly admitted was at hand.

Ewell appeared infirm and prematurely old. A cripple, he moved feebly on crutches, and had the air of a tired, worn-out, disappointed man. He took the best view of his capture; said his men would not fight, and that the war was near its close. The days of old Stonewall Jackson were over, he said; but he believed that even with his inspiration, nothing more could have been done. Speaking of the Richmond conflagration, the results of which he had not heard, he said, "I acted under orders, but regret that those

orders did not include Breckinridge, who should have been thrown into the hottest of the flames."

Kershaw seemed a model soldier in look and bearing. Compact, firm, and self-contained, he had the manners of a gentleman, and was, perhaps, the most brilliant man of the party. "For two years I have doubted the justice of the cause," said he; "but my social position would not warrant its abandonment." Custis Lee was reticent, hardly courteous, haughty, soured, and ugly in spirit. When the column passed, one ambulance in the advance, containing this group of general officers, and followed by the 800 of lesser rank, I thought of the prisoners whom the Roman generals brought home in chains to grace their entry into the capital. There were the same proud, defiant bearing, the same unconquered and unconquerable spirit, the same stateliness and arrogance, which no disaster or defeat could move. Here, in these later days, in this wilderness of desolation, where there are but few witnesses of their humiliation, where there were no shouts of triumph, or pæans of victory, marched these 800, followed by the 8000, with as proud a bearing as if they were indeed the victors, awaiting the crowns of laurel and the plaudits of the world.

There was suffering in this bivouac which needed instant alleviation, and a hospital was at once established for the sick. They were marching without tents, and with but few blankets to protect them from the rain. The storm had lasted a week; the fields were soaked with water, which also covered the surface of the ground — the only resting-place these thousands of men could claim. In groups all over the closely guarded fields these prisoners were collected, cooking their now liberal rations of beef and coffee. Night after night they gathered round their camp fires, sleeping in the soppy grass, chilled, and suffering from the cold night winds of the season; while scattered all through the ranks were men who were in the last stages of exhaustion by exposure, sickness, and wounds. Foot-sore and weary came forward those who were to go into hospital; and I never saw so utterly pitiful a sight as these poor, squalid creatures, on fire with fever, racked with chills and rheumatic pains, and emaciated by disease and want. Many were too weak to stand, and were obliged to rest upon the ground. Their condition seemed hopeless, and for such numbers we had no hospital accommodations.

Among these sick and wounded men was one who

had attracted my attention, from his superior intelligence, his culture, and refinement, which were in marked contrast to the repulsiveness of his outer garb. His clothing was torn and threadbare, his pantaloons in ribbons about his feet, his hat without a brim, his hair bleached and tangled; and from a recent fall on the march he was encased in mud. Holding out his hand, which was covered with a stained and ragged handkerchief, he addressed me, and asked if I would amputate his fingers, which were badly mangled by a fragment of a shell. The wound had not been dressed since his musket was shot from his hands nine days before, nor had the steel splinters been extracted. I removed the clotted covering, and found his hand in a most offensive condition, so utterly neglected had it been. The bones were uninjured, and with proper care the hand might yet be saved. The wound was cleansed, and dressed with fresh lint and bandages; and as I was about to pass on to another case, he said, "I am faint for want of food. Can you get me some hard tack?" One of the guard at his camp fire cheerfully took from his haversack his ration of uncooked pork, and cut a liberal slice, which he gave me with some hard bread. I took it to my rebel soldier, who ate it with an eager appetite and a thankful smile,

saying that if I knew what he had lived upon since he started on the campaign, I could realize how near starvation he was. Said he, "I had a pint of corn, and for nine days that was my only food." But, looking back to a luxurious home, he said, sadly, "I have not always been thus reduced. My home is in Savannah. I joined a battalion of our young men in 1861, because I believed in the southern cause. For three years I fought and suffered, a private soldier, until at last my eyes were opened to the rapacity of the leaders in Richmond; and I have been longing for the old flag again. There are but few of us left now," said he, "of those boys who went out in '61; and when they get news of our last battle, there'll be mourning in Savannah, for they were her choicest sons. But I thank God the war is over."

His father, a devoted and consistent Union man, now the collector of the port of Savannah, was at this time in Washington. I wrote that Henry was a prisoner, slightly wounded. A few weeks from this time they were united, after this separation of years; and I had afterwards the satisfaction of taking them both by the hand, and receiving their kindly attentions in a northern city, where the raw pork and hard tack were recalled as the most delicious of luxuries.

CHAPTER XI.

SUFFERINGS AT BURKSVILLE.

Scarcity of Surgeons. — Scenes among the Wounded. — Engrossing Experiences. — Overcrowded Sheds and Railroad Buildings. — Amputations in the Field. — Wounded transferred to City Point. — Suffering on the Trains. — Preparation for Death. — Return of the Army.

THE surgeons with whom I started from City Point established their hospital at Wilson's Station, as before stated, instead of at the *front*, where they were ordered to go. They had an ample hospital equipage, medical stores and commissary supplies in abundance, with but half a dozen patients, who had straggled into their camp, while a few miles beyond were thousands who were suffering for the very stores and attention which they were sent to supply. The railroad was uncompleted beyond Wilson's, and the trains could not therefore run farther; but wagon transportation could have been obtained, and ought to have been secured, in this pressing emergency of suffering.

Leaving my companions, I pushed on alone to Burksville with a few private stores, and found wagon and ambulance trains arriving at the Junction filled with these maimed and bleeding men. They came creeping slowly over the hills, as if to soften the agonies of such transportation. Every shed and building was filled at once. The men were laid upon the ground under the shelter of brush, in freight depots, in the open air, under extemporized roofs of rubber blankets, the mud up to one's knees, and the moving from point to point almost an impossibility. There were but few surgeons, and these were overworked at the operating tables, while three thousand men were lying in this squalid suffering.

In two or three open sheds and in one railroad building were six hundred men without even straw for bedding, and no blankets to protect them from the rain which soaked through these long wards of misery. Dr. Richardson, who was in charge here, ordered milk punch for the amputated cases, and they were soon supplied. Several were dying; and upon the spot my brandy flask was soon in use, restoring two or three sufficiently to get from them their names, and to write some last message to their friends. In one row were five men lying on the hard floor, all thigh amputations,

and all dying. Two of them were conscious, and were able to gasp out some last words for wife or mother, which were written quickly down, and the letters despatched, telling how and where they died. In a small room, partitioned off from the main shed, were three hopeless cases, placed there that they might breathe their last in peace, apart from the noise and excitement of this overcrowded shed — one with a severe shell wound through both hips, another with an arm and shoulder carried away, and the other with his jaw and face terribly shattered, and his tongue half gone. Men were sitting up bathing their own wounds, when they could get the water, or were helping each other, while there were moanings and cries for help, to all of which it was impossible to respond. When the more pressing wants were met, with sponges, rubber basin, bandages, and lint, there was enough to do.

As I entered one of these buildings, from one end to the other there were cries, "Doctor, O doctor, come and dress my wound!" "Mine, doctor, mine!" "Nobody ever comes to me; don't pass me by!" "I shall die if I cannot get some water!" "O, if you only knew how I suffer!" "Do dress this thigh," or arm, or leg, or head, — each one proclaiming his own shattered frame, helpless and in agony. In another

shed were two hundred rebel wounded. A surgeon of their own sat there and smoked his pipe, never showing sympathy enough to dress a single wound, so far as I could see, while our own soldiers acted as their nurses, treating them as tenderly as they could. One poor rebel, with a thigh amputation, lying in a building with some of our own men, in answer to the question whether he wished to be removed to the shed where his own companions were, said, "We are all of one family now; these are my brothers as much as yours; let me stay where I am;" while I could see under his head a little Testament, which he had been reading in this very hour of his suffering and loneliness, having the new revelation of that wider fellowship which I felt he was so soon to realize in another world. In one corner was another dying man; and next to him one shot through both eyes, who prayed for his release; while others, who in their very agony were crying, "Have mercy, O Lord, have mercy upon me!" were far beyond all healing.

After several days the railroad was opened, and it was taxed to its utmost capacity in transferring the wounded to City Point. There were long trains of twenty freight cars, as closely packed inside as the men could lie, and covering every foot of space upon

the top, with no blankets or straw for a wounded limb or an amputated stump.

In this train was work for fifty pairs of hands. Their wounds were throbbing with fever, and needed the cooling of only one sponge full of water. There were one thousand men ; they had been placed in the cars in the early afternoon, and were to have started before dark. Many would not live to reach City Point, and their last hours in this jolting train would necessarily be hours of keenest suffering. With cold spring water I went through each car, bathing their heated stumps. It was dark, and there were no signs of starting. For hours they had been lying in this state neglected, and upon every hand the men were asking, " How long, O, how long, must we lie here ? " It was heart-rending to pass from car to car and see their condition, to hear their cries for even a cup of water to moisten their lips, or a drop to wet their fevered wounds, and to see their silent appeal by the holding up of undressed limbs. The surgeon in charge of the train for whom these thousand were waiting and suffering, was found at midnight in a comfortable room half a mile off, enjoying a cigar and a game of euchre. He was reported to the Medical Director. Even this faithless surgeon would have been melted

had he seen their gratitude as the sponge was squeezed, and the cold water flowed smoothly over the stiffened, clotted bandages, softening them, and reaching the wound, which was soothed and refreshed by the application: "God bless you, sir!" "O, this is so cool!" "I shall sleep now!" "I hope you'll never know the want of water?" and the like. The men were hungry, and had had nothing since their early dinner twelve hours before. I went up to our tent, built fires, had large "containers" of beef tea prepared, and gave a little to each, also filling canteens, and supplying other needs of the moment. At two o'clock in the morning the train started with its living freight of shattered, suffering men. This was hardly over before a long train of army wagons of wounded, just from the field, reached the camp. Bins, sponges, bandages, lint, and plaster were again in requisition, and making a heavy draught upon the medical wagons. Candles gave out, and we were left in the dark. We had to do the best we could, the men lying on the ground covered only by tent flies, which hardly shed the rain; and so we worked until morning, dressing and feeding men who for five days had been without either care or nourishment.

As the days passed, and the wounded arrived in

large numbers, more ample accommodation was provided. Now a regular field hospital was established, with all its equipage; the tents arranged in streets were all trenched, and a new corps of surgeons took charge, fresh and ready for their work. The roughly-constructed operating tables were in the open air, and were in constant use. Resections, probings, and amputations went on, and men were under the knife from morning to evening, and often until candle-light. The days passed with lightning rapidity, so crowded with engrossing experiences that days might count for years from the abundance of life which was lived in them.

I have often been asked if men, under such circumstances, embrace the opportunity to prepare for death, when death seems so very near. My experience accords so completely with that of an English gentleman in the hospitals at Scutari,* that I am tempted to quote his language, which is very much to the point here.

“The hospital is only, after all, a part of the battlefield; it is a crowd of those who have fought, and who, fighting, have, through wounds or weakness, had to fall back from active service to passive suffering. They are still, as it were, in the ranks; still on duty,

* Hon. and Rev. Sydney G. Osborne.

to recover, to return, to die, or to be invalided at home.

“Men in the field speak not of danger ; it speaks for itself, and none are deaf to it, though none will act as though they heard its warning voice. Men who for many weeks have lived a life in which the only change from the privation and watchfulness which undermined their strength, was the call to action, one more deadly than another, become so habituated to hold life cheap, are so thoroughly wrapped up in the risk at which they seek the honor of the profession, that, as in camp, so in hospital, death is an ever-expected guest, and few indeed seek to make special preparation for its coming. When it does come to them on their beds, it is still a soldier's death : a letter or two may be dictated to a friend, some messages sent to brother officers ; a quick, calm, distribution of effects at hand made ; gratitude expressed to those who so kindly ever support their brother soldiers in those moments : these, with the brief services the chaplain can offer, form the chief features of the last scene in the lives of these brave men. It is a battle-field death just postponed till the victim has joined in the hospital ranks.”

At this time the army was returning victorious. On the 11th of April, General Grant and staff, with

three of his corps commanders, dismounted at Burksville, taking the cars for City Point, having made in the saddle thirty-five miles that day. They came in as quietly and calmly as if they had been out on an inspection of the army, instead of achieving victories unparalleled in their importance in our history, and ending in that week the bloodiest war of modern times.

On the 12th, General Sheridan, with his forty captured flags, followed by his cavalry and artillery, received the plaudits of those who could cheer them as they passed. On the 13th, at sundown, the Sixth Corps crossed the railroad junction at Burksville, passed out through the hospital encampment, and bivouacked on the hills beyond. They had marched eighteen miles in six hours, over horrible roads, but were all on fire with enthusiasm, cheering, always victorious, and coming in almost on the run. The Second Corps, and the Fifth, and the Ninth, with the Army of the James, followed on, their work completed, the problem of free government solved, and this nation once more at peace.

CHAPTER XII.

PETERSBURG HOSPITALS.

CLOSING SCENES. — THE FAIR GROUNDS.

Contrasts. — The Blooming Gardens of Petersburg. — Mr. J. W. Paige, Jr. — His Work at the Fair Grounds. — Gangrene Ward. — The Rebel Soldier. — His Sufferings and Death. — The Blue Ward. — The Dying Marylander. — Edward Morley, the Massachusetts Soldier. — Colonel Prentiss.

FROM the intense sufferings and labors in the overcrowded sheds and railroad depots at Burksville, to the clean, quiet, and comfortable tents and barracks of the well-ordered hospitals at Petersburg, — this was the contrast which twenty-four hours brought me. Returning with the feeling that peace had dawned, that there would be no more reeking hospitals, nor desolated homes, nor broken hearts; and that even upon these Virginia fields fruitful harvests would spring in the very track of war, — flowers even upon the battle-field, — it will not be difficult to realize that in

Petersburg I could find refreshment in the beauty and fragrance of its gardens, and rest in the quiet seclusion of its groves of pines. It is a quaint old city, entirely southern in its style and architecture. The verandas covered with creeping vines, which grow everywhere in magnificent neglect, were bowers of beauty. Every shrub, and tree, and flowering bush, from the rose and the magnolia to the orange and the fig, had almost a tropical luxuriance, and the air was filled with the aroma. Many of the residences were deserted; and where they were not, we had cordial invitations to enter at their open gates and pick the flowers. The pansy, the violet, the narcissus, the double-flowering almond, the exquisite wisteria, and the lily of the valley, with every variety of buds and roses, — these filled our tent with fragrance. All this was an oasis in a desert of suffering. There were men all about us who were at the very last ebb of life, and before the night passed the light of the eternal morning dawned for them. To lose one's self in the quiet peacefulness of such an afternoon was indeed a relief after such a tension upon mind and heart.

At this point Mr. J. W. Paige, Jr., of Boston, was in charge of the Sanitary Commission. In his tent under the magnificent pines, which recalled one of his

favorite Italian haunts, and which gave shade to the Fair Grounds Hospital, I found him engrossed in the most laborious duties of administration. The incompetency of one of the agents, and the serious illness of another, just then stricken down with fever, brought upon him a wide range of duties. These he assumed and carried through, with a quiet energy and self-forgetting devotion. Obstacles were met and overcome. The relations between the Medical Department and the Sanitary Commission were harmonized by a quick perception and no little diplomatic skill, which resulted in making both more effective than either would have been alone. In the wards his gentleness and skill in dressing soothed many a sufferer, while his cheerfulness lightened many an hour of loneliness and pain. Anticipating the capricious appetites of the sickest men, there was no delicacy which the markets of Petersburg could afford that he did not make to find its way to the wards, daintily prepared on his little stove in the open air, and taken to the soldier whose feverish palate could only relish such delicate fare.

To avoid the dangers of a dreadful infection, the gangrene ward was established in an ice-house, apart from the main hospital. Here, where the most loathsome and hopeless cases were awaiting death, where

was every type of this horrible disease, was the scene of many of his most touching ministries. Here were limbs which could only be cleansed, not dressed; amputations where the flaps had been eaten away, and the flesh was ragged and fallen from the bone; wounds into which the gangrene was making its fearful ravages day by day — a charnel-house, indeed, where was opportunity for such service as is rendered at the bed of death, when the sufferer is past all healing.

“Make them as comfortable as you can; they will see no hope this side the grave,” said the kind-hearted surgeon; and however nauseous the air, or offensive the work, our friend labored cheerfully on, making the poor fellows feel that the greatest favor to him was simply to permit him to continue his ministry. Thus through the broiling heat of an early summer there was this noble fidelity to his work, which won the love and respect of all who were brought into relations with him.

In the intervals of resting from little attentions to a poor, lonely boy, a rebel soldier who was dying, I took up pen and paper to write, while sitting at his bedside. Let us look into the ward. The wound has just been dressed, the hemorrhage stopped, the bottles, basin, syringe, sponge, and water cleared away. He is

sleeping easily now. A bright-eyed, handsome, intelligent lad of seventeen, I was attracted to him by the uncomplaining patience with which he bore his sufferings. He was in the Confederate army, but was one of those who would never be called a rebel, being a conscript, and at heart loyal to his flag. He was a Virginian, the son of a poor minister in one of those scattered settlements on the Southside Railroad; and from occasional conversations I had gleaned scraps of private history, which could only increase my kind feeling for him. In September, 1864, working quietly on his father's farm, a mere boy, he was seized in a merciless conscription, and hurried to Richmond, where he was placed in the ranks of the rebel army. He was an only child; and, although he confessed to many short-comings, he knew that he was the only comfort of his home, and told me of his mother's grief when he went away. His wound, to all outward seeming, was slight, being between the shoulders, and hardly showing a bruise. The shell had cut his clothing, and but just touched the spinal column; but it had, however, paralyzed the lower part of his body, so that his condition was one of great helplessness. A bed sore soon developed itself; and it increased with such rapidity, that all thought that

his life was only hanging by a thread. As I stood by him, he opened his eyes, and said to me, in the most distressed way, "I cannot open my mouth;" and, upon examination, I found that he had the lockjaw, to add to his dreadful sufferings. "An hour ago I could laugh and sing," he said; "but now I know that I must die." The surgeon, being called, confirmed the impression that his case was hopeless; and we determined that, at whatever cost, his last hours should be undisturbed. Bay rum seemed to refresh him; and I bathed and rubbed his head, and chest, and arms, the poor fellow expressing his gratitude by word and look, saying to me, "You are the best friend I ever had," and repeating it over and over again.

After a few moments of dreamy repose, he opened his eyes, and said, "Do you really think that I am going to die? I do not want to die." I told him that his condition was very critical, and that we all felt that he could not continue very long. "I have been trying to make my mind up to it," he said; "but it is so hard, and I am afraid to die. I have put off my repentance until it is too late—too late; and now I know that God will not receive me." I told him that it could never be too late, and, if he really wished

to be forgiven, and would only open his heart to all holy influences, that God would send his peace and pardon down, and would receive him just as kindly and as lovingly as an earthly father would if he were to grieve or trouble him. He seemed to feel that God never could care for *him*; that his face was turned away, and that all his prayers and intercessions were in vain. Then I tried to make him feel how large a place there must be in the Father's heart for all such poor, suffering children as he; how rich and abundant his merciful care; how inexhaustible his love. I told him that even the birds of the air and the flowers of the field were not beneath his notice; that not even a sparrow could fall without his seeing it; so that in his own fear and suffering this Father was nearer to him than any earthly father could be; and that heaven was open to him, and all sweet and blessed influences were around him, if he could only receive them as from a Father's hand. Then I repeated to him the little psalm, "Bow down thine ear, O Lord, for I am poor and needy," with, "The Lord is my Shepherd, . . . and though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me." Then followed Christ's invitation, "Come unto me, all ye

that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Then I repeated a part of the chapter, "Let not your heart be troubled," with those other words, so beautiful, so rich in their promises, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

And now, in that lonely, quiet hour, there seemed to be a Presence which glorified everything about us — a spiritual uplifting, a deep revealing, which the repetition after me of the Lord's prayer seemed to make all the more real. This was hardly audible to any but ourselves, although in the ward perfect stillness reigned, the men all vaguely comprehending the subject of our communion.

Here was a young man dying. With strong tenacity he held to life, shrinking from what he called his doom. His distress of mind was such as I had never seen. His old theological teaching had told him that he must have a change of heart, or he could not be saved; and he was too weak to understand the process, or to know where to begin, or what to do. He was in despair. There was no sense of God's loving presence; and so

he must die, feeling that the eleventh hour was too late, and shrinking from his fate. I had never before attempted to minister to such a case. In most pitiable tones of distress he would murmur, "Lord Jesus, save my soul;" while in this great gulf of sorrow I could only meet him with the Saviour's words, hardly trusting to my own, yet ever hoping and watching for the incoming and indwelling of that peace which should surpass all human understanding. And I seemed to see it come at last, as the angel hovered over him, and as perfect love had cast out fear. From a quiet sleep he woke calm and perfectly resigned. Spiritual things became more real to him, and he looked with a clearer faith and a more simple trust to the end which we all felt was very near. A day or two before, I had written to his father to come and see his dying son. Through the kindness of a soldier the letter reached him, and one afternoon, just at dusk, he came. Although there was the quiet joy of their meeting, yet in that sad place it was a sad sight to see this poor gray-haired man—subdued, crushed by suffering, impoverished by the war—sitting, hour after hour, by his son, who was dying by the slow torture of lockjaw and of the poison of his wound. The subtle fever was burning his strength away; and as the father watched

and waited with his boy, smoothing the hair upon the pillow, wiping the drops upon his forehead, or fanning him with only a scrap of paper then at hand, there was so much tenderness in his eye, such silent, speechless, tearless sorrow, that I could only leave them together, — the son so happy now, the father so thankful that even this boon had been vouchsafed him, and both knit together in this last communion and companionship of their lives. And thus the night passed and morning came; and as the hours wore on, he seemed to suffer more and more. His body twitched nervously with pain, his jaws were set, his limbs grew cold, and his lips white; but there was no more murmuring. He lay serenely conscious that death was calling him, and at last he answered the call, passing through the valley without a struggle, leaving this poor father to go back alone to his stricken and childless home.

One evening, just at twilight, I went into our blue ward at the Fair Grounds, Petersburg, to see a lad whose condition for many days had led us to believe that he could not continue very long. As I sat by his side, and placed my hand upon his forehead to smooth back his hair, he said to me, “Do you know, sir, that I am looking death in the face?” I could only reply,

“Yes, I know you are, my dear boy;” for the repeated hemorrhage of his wound had convinced me that his recovery was beyond a possibility. He was perfectly submissive and trustful. He was ready to die, or he was willing to live, — as it should please the all-loving Father; and as I had seen, hour after hour, an attendant stanching the blood which was trickling from his wound, I could only feel that we were to count the hours before we should have to lay him in his grave. He had been a faithful soldier for three years, and had been discharged. The old farm had no charms for him; and after the excitements of the home greetings had passed, he went as a substitute back to the army, receiving a large bounty at the hands of the brokers. Then followed days of what may well be termed *sin*. We need to throw a veil of charity over this part of the story; for although he had wandered far away, he had fallen into the hands of devils in human shape, who drugged him, and robbed him of his money; while all the time, in his heart of hearts, he was true. And now he was suffering, perhaps dying, for the cause he had loved so well. He told me how deep his valley of humiliation had been; that his struggle was all alone; that through sleepless days and nights he had been praying for

God's gracious, helping spirit, until at last the burden had been lifted off, and now all-sustaining faith and promises had been made real; and the trouble, and doubt, and terror of the grave were all lost in the opening glory. When I went away, leaving him to others' care, it was with the feeling that he would not be a care to anybody very long, — hoping only that his mother's letter would come, to bring its solace to him before he died.

In such ministries as these the days were spent; and yet, when night came on, and left us to a retrospect, there was the sense of how little we had really done. Often hours would pass in sitting by the bedside of a soldier, simply watching and waiting for a change; giving a sip of porter once in a while; brushing a fly off his face when he was disturbed; shading his eyes, or fanning him; answering only when he spoke, and keeping always quiet that he might sleep.

A fatal wound through the right lung had laid one noble fellow low; and his last hours were hours of suffering. I had previously gained the young man's confidence, and had learned his story; and when it had fallen to me to tell him that he could not live, he seemed perfectly ready and willing to die, — being calm, hopeful, and believing. He died almost in my

arms, leaving his messages for loved ones at home, which it was my duty to communicate by letter.

From his bed I go to that of another — a little boy of but fourteen years, very low with chronic diarrhœa. I had rarely seen such agony of suffering. The poor little fellow, so wan and thin, his face so pale and wasted, his vital power so nearly exhausted, and his whole condition making such an appeal to one's tenderest sympathy, — so lonely away from his mother and his home, — knew he was going to die, yet had no conception of the change. He passed on as I stood at his bedside.

And another case, Edward Morley, a lad from Westfield, Massachusetts, lying in agony in a ward near my tent. His wound was a compound fracture of the thigh. He was too weak for an amputation, his hemorrhage requiring the constant pressure of a finger upon the femoral artery, and the poor fellow was suffering beyond all hope of relief. He was one of the noble spirits of the army — a genuine soldier, with as fine a face and as clear an eye, and with as kindly and thoughtful expression as one would wish to see. He spoke but seldom, giving but little expression to his feelings; but his thoughts were constantly of those who would be left at home to mourn. He

was tranquil and resigned, and even cheerful at times when a comrade came to his bed to talk with him.

When I communicated the result of a consultation to him, he simply replied, "Do not think that I am afraid to die. At home I was surrounded by every religious influence. Since my mother's death I have had the memory of her love to keep me true, and I know that she will welcome me up there." At his request I repeated the psalm, "The Lord is my Shepherd." Before it was finished, his large, deep eyes opened and looked into mine, and tears formed and rolled down his cheeks at the passage, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me." I felt that he was leaning upon that rod and staff, as he looked, in the midst of all his sufferings, with a clear and living faith unto the end.

He had been in the service four years, and was then but twenty; but the lines of suffering were cut deep into his face; and as he lay there so patiently, with such sweet resignation to his Father's will, the whole ward seemed to be lighted with the triumph of his closing hours. He did not seem to demand my sym-

pathy, although he had it all; he only wanted companionship, and he asked not to be left alone, but to have me sit by his bed and watch with him through the night. But he did not need even this, unless I was to sit and keep a lonely vigil over his tenantless body; for of a sudden he died, hardly gasping, yet conscious to the end.

In one of our wards we had an officer, Colonel Clifton J. Prentiss, of Baltimore, whose case was of such peculiar and touching interest that it ought not to be passed by. In one of the closing battles of the war he was wounded through the lungs. When I first saw him, he was brought into the hospital from the field, as we thought, fatally hurt. At the same time a lad, a rebel soldier, was lifted from the stretcher upon an adjoining bed, with a thigh amputation, having been struck by a fragment of a shell above the knee. This Union officer and this rebel soldier lay side by side, not knowing that they were indeed own brothers, and unconscious, in all that bloody strife which had set its fatal seal upon them both, that they had been striking the one against the other, and falling but ten feet apart. And so, by some blessed providence, they were brought together at last, — the glance of an eye, or some well-known tone of voice,

making their recognition complete, which it only needed the hand-grasp to confirm. In the early stages of their wounds, two of their brothers — one of whom neither had seen for eight years — came down to nurse and watch with these other two, who were dying so far from home. And through the months which followed they were all united, these four, who had been so widely separated, bound together by the ties of sympathy, and service, and brotherly affection.

And now they are both at rest: Billy — the kindly impulsive boy — and his noble brother united, after such a fearful separation of sacrifice and of blood, in this last companionship of their lives, — both entering the new home, where there is no distinction between the blue jacket and the gray.

The younger died first. Day after day we used to visit him in the quiet ward where he seemed to be so much alone, for he had but little sympathy until he was converted over to the old flag which he had forsaken. And when the memories of his home and his early companionships came over him, and he felt that even this renewal of old ties was still but a fraternal estrangement, his boy's heart quite gave way, and he begged for the kindly smile of this elder brother, for the love and generous sympathy of their boyhood. In

a few weeks the exhaustion of his system was so complete that he sank rapidly away and died.

The brave and all-enduring colonel lived on,—every breath a stab, and every movement of the poor frail body like the tension and snapping of some cord of life. Through many weary months he waited and suffered. Life had much in store for him. He longed to be again amid its peaceful activity; yet he was always submissive, and only looked to see what was the loving Father's will. And that will was revealed at last, giving him but time to say, "It is well; I am ready to go."

Enriched and strengthened by discipline,—a true growth from sacrifice and suffering,—his was a death which has caused many a heartache outside the circle of his home. His earlier years were spent in Maryland, where he had all the advantage of the best culture and training which his father's school could give, which were superior, probably, to those of any similar establishment in the State. The elegant accomplishments of the father, his careful discipline, his scholarly tastes and habits, together with the genial influences of his home, all joined in the ripening of a character which it only needed such an experience as that of the past four years to develop into a manhood at once

strong, harmonious, and beautiful. He was a devout, earnest, and faithful man ; ready always for kind offices for those about him, breathing a spirit of helpfulness and service, when, by whatever sacrifice, he could do anything for another. This spirit of self-forgetting lingered about him to the end. Upon the little table by his humble hospital bed lay his Bible, his constant companion. The sharp discipline of suffering was not without its heavier and darker clouds ; yet through the gloom the light ineffable of trust and peace was streaming in, giving diviner beauty to the spirit which could answer cheerfully to the angel's call.

CHAPTER XIII.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

Effect of the Assassination in the Army.—His Character and Position in History.

THE Army of Northern Virginia had capitulated. Its last banner was lowered and trailing, its arms and artillery had been stacked and parked, its organization forever destroyed. General Grant had returned to City Point, the war virtually at an end. The Army of the Potomac was resting upon its laurels, with only magnanimity for its old enemy, while men of every grade and rank were freely living over old scenes and fighting over old battles, mingling their common memories of victory and defeat, as it had alternated, in our history.

There was good cheer everywhere. The rank and file of the rebel army, dispersing to their homes, filling the roads and swarming through the fields, shared the

hospitalities of our soldiers, and were treated with a kindly and liberal spirit.

It was at this moment that the triumph and rejoicing of the nation were changed to mourning and desolation. Abraham Lincoln was dead ! A great sorrow clouded the brightness of the glory which for the moment had burst upon the people, and a nation was in tears. The booming cannon, the craped and drooping flag, the dirges of the bands, and the tolling of the bells were the sounds and signs of national grief. The army was profoundly moved. A reaction, which made Confederate soldiers tremble, followed the assassination, and arrogance melted into humility.

With all generous motives for those with whom he had been contending, Abraham Lincoln could utter these words, already embalmed in the memory of the world : " With malice toward^s none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in ; to bind up the nation's wounds ; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphans ; to do all which may achieve a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."

And yet, with this gentle pleading for his enemies, there was one standing at his side to strike him down.

Through Mr. Lincoln's greatest trials, through the most perplexing periods of his administration, when perils thickened about his path, I could only think of the burden which rested upon his mind and heart. He once said, "I do not know how this war will end; but I do know that, end as it may, I shall not long survive it."

One who knew him well, said that he broke down, time and again, under his weighty cares; "his noble face became haggard and weary, and nothing but the strong will and the undergrowth of gnarled manhood prevented him from going down to his grave." A feeling of personal loyalty went out instinctively to meet him. If there was blindness to his errors when he made them, there was also the thought of the unparalleled dangers and difficulties of his position, of those graver problems of public policy, for which there was no precedent, which he was called upon to solve.

The life of a Republic was in his keeping; and although an unknown, untried man, the eternal providence of God was over him; and from his simple trust came the inspiration and the strength for the fulfilment of his lofty destiny. His greatness, his perfect balance of character, his wisdom, calmness, mag-

unanimity, and tenderness of heart, vindicated itself at last, and he won the world's respect and honor. A faithful worker for his country's weal, persevering in his task, true to his great trust, he wore his honors with humility and prayerfulness. He ruled in truly regal majesty, for he ruled in justice tempered with mercy. His education, such only as the rough, pioneer life of a wilderness could afford, was yet such as to make him, perhaps, the central figure of modern history. Devoting himself with singleness of purpose to his stupendous work, he labored for the highest aims; and in working got but little of what most men work to get. Still, he attained what but few men have ever reached—the symmetrical development of powers which in a great crisis of his country's life raised him to be first in that country's love; and he so worked and lived, that in his proudest moments of triumph he never forgot his humble birth, his hard-handed toil, his sympathy with the people whom he always carried in his heart. Such majesty with such simplicity! such power with such self-forgetfulness! His natural dignity was mingled with unfailing play of humor, while his almost grotesque ugliness of look and stature did not derogate from the nobility of his manhood.

In the great and closing triumphs of the war he did not forget the men who had achieved them. How beautiful was the spirit with which he visited the hospitals but a week before he died! Standing at every bedside, he had a kindly word and smile for every man, speaking to every soldier in the camp, and cheering them all by his genial presence and his encouraging words. How benignant a close to his public career! With what reverence these thousands of crippled men will regard his name, enshrining it with all affectionate loyalty in their hearts and memories forever!

It seemed as if, in the bolt of the assassin, the national life received the last test to which republican government could be subjected. Aside from the public grief, the national functions were undisturbed. A continent was draped in mourning, yet the vitality of its government was unimpaired. In our history no event had created such universal prostration. The loyal North, appalled by the catastrophe, found expression for its grief only in silent "going about the streets." It was a day when the sun and the light, and the moon and the stars, seemed darkened; it was a day when fears were in the way, and strong men bowed

themselves, and were "afraid of that which is high," and the keeper of the house trembled.

It would be impossible to give in words the sense of desolation with which we moved about our hospital work, or of the profound emotions awakened by every muffled drum and booming cannon. We had suffering, and sorrow, and death all about us. But greater sorrow and bereavement came to hallow the lesser, while these mingled emotions served to chasten every thought and feeling, and to make every duty more sacred than before.

With the return of peace came the home welcome to our sick and wounded men. Ward by ward was vacated, hospital after hospital was given up, until at last the dismantled barracks were all that was left of the scene of our absorbing labors. Year by year these marks of a great hospital department will be lost. But the memories of calm endurance of suffering, of noble hearts hushed in death, of precious companionships formed, and of strong characters ripened in great emergencies, will ever yield a grateful blessing upon the services and sacrifices of hospital life.



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